



SUMMER

No. 979

THE  
**CORNHILL**

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# THE CORNHILL



No. 979

SUMMER, 1949

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EDITED BY PETER QUENNEL

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

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'They had started speaking of "women and children"—that phrase which exempts the male from sanity when it has been repeated a few times,' wrote E. M. Forster in *A Passage to India*; and when women figure as 'women-folk,' and there is talk of the sense of protective responsibility that any 'decent man' must feel towards them, we know that we shall soon be plunged into some kind of modern witch-hunt. Since the appearance of the last CORNHILL such inflammatory expressions have been aimed at a current work of literature—an American novel of great length which, with painstaking and painful realism, describes the thoughts and behaviour of licentious soldiery on a remote Pacific island. The book has considerable literary merits and, quite apart from those merits, is obviously an honest attempt to enlarge our understanding of the contemporary human situation. Few books seem less likely to corrupt, deprave or provide erotic stimulus; and, if the book has done any harm (which ourselves we think improbable), the damage can have been only to an occasional weak-minded person, without genuine literary interests, who, had there been no gratuitous publicity, would probably have never read it. We are glad to observe that, notwithstanding the journalistic hue-and-cry, both the British public and the British law have displayed unusual common sense. Can it be that we are gradually growing up? Or is it merely that, after the experiences of the last ten years, we are becoming more and more impatient of being badgered for our own good?

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[The Editor asks that all contributions should be addressed to him at 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and accompanied by a stamped envelope.

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## A Monastery

BY PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR

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WITH curiosity and misgiving I walked up-hill from the Rouen-Yvetot road towards the Abbey of St. Wandrille. I had spent an abominable night in Rouen, in a small hotel near the station where a procession of nightmares had been punctuated by the noise of trains arriving and leaving with a crashing and whistling and an escape of steam and smoke which, after a week's noctambulism in Paris, turned my night into a period of acute, and apparently interminable, agony. Even the misty windings of the lower Seine, the fat green fields and Indian files of poplars, among which the bus had travelled next morning, could not dispel my mood of sluggishness and depression; and now, climbing the hot road through the late summer woods, I wondered if my project had not better be abandoned. What I dreaded almost more than success was an immediate failure. If there was no room at the Abbey, or if for some other reason the monks could not receive me, I should have to return to Paris and readjust my plans for the next few weeks. I was arriving unknown and unannounced, a citizen of the heretic island across the Channel, without even the excuse that I wished to go into retreat; I was, in fact, in search of somewhere quiet and cheap to stay while I continued to work on a book that I was writing. A friend in Paris had told me that St. Wandrille was one of the oldest and most beautiful Benedictine Abbeys in France; and I had made my plans and set out . . .

It was Sunday, and the gatehouse was full of visitors who had just emerged from mass, buying pictures, medals, rosaries and assorted *bondieuserie*. A harassed monk in horn-rimmed glasses was answering innumerable questions; and a quarter of an hour had gone by before I managed, with considerable trepidation, to explain my proposal. He listened sympathetically, and asked me to return after he had spoken to the Abbot. When at last his black-robed figure reappeared across the garden, I saw that he was smiling. Seizing my heavy bag, 'The most reverend Father Abbot can receive you,' he announced, 'and wishes you welcome.'

A few moments later a door had shut out the noise of the Sunday visitors, and a silent maze of white staircases and passages swallowed us up. The monk opened a door and said, 'Here is your cell.'

It was a high seventeenth-century room with a comfortable bed, a *prie-dieu*, a writing-table, a tapestry chair, a green adjustable reading-lamp, and a rather disturbing crucifix on the whitewashed stone walls. The window looked out over a grassy courtyard, in which a small fountain played, over the grey flank of the monastery buildings and the wall that screened the Abbey from the half-timbered houses of the village. A vista of forest flowed away beyond. In the middle of the writing-table stood a large inkwell, a tray full of pens and a pad into which new blotting paper had just been fitted. I had only time to unpack my clothes and papers and books before a great bell began ringing and the monk, who was the guest-master, returned to lead me to the refectory for the midday meal. As we walked, the buildings changed in period from the architecture of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries to Gothic; and we halted at length by the piscina in an ogival cloister of the utmost beauty, outside a great carved door where several other visitors had also been assembled. The guest-master shepherded us into the refectory in which the Abbot, a tall, white-haired, patrician figure with a black skull-cap and a gold pectoral cross on a green cord, was waiting to receive us. To each of the guests he spoke a few words; and some, sinking upon one knee, kissed the great emerald on his right hand. To me he addressed a polite formula, in English that had obviously been acquired at some remote period from a governess. A novice advanced with a silver ewer and a basin; the Abbot poured a little water over our hands, a towel was offered, and our welcome, according to Benedictine custom, was complete.

The singing of grace continued for several minutes; and, when we sat down, I found myself between two visiting priests, their birettas folded flat beside their plates, on the long guest-table in the middle of the refectory, just below the Abbot's dais. Down the walls of this immense hall the tables of the monks were ranged in two unbroken lines, and behind them a row of Romanesque pilasters with interlocking Norman arches formed a shallow arcade. The place had an aura of immense antiquity. Grey stone walls soared to a Gothic timber roof, and, above the Abbot's table, a giant crucifix was suspended. As the monks tucked their napkins into their collars with a simultaneous and uniform gesture, an unearthly voice began to speak in Latin from the shadows overhead and, peering towards it, I caught sight, at the far end of the refectory, of a pillared bay twenty feet up which projected like a martin's nest, accessible only by some hidden stairway. This hanging pulpit framed the head and shoulders of a monk, reading

from a desk by the light of a lamp which hollowed a glowing alcove out of the penumbra. Loud-speakers relayed his sing-song voice. Meanwhile, the guest-master and a host of aproned monks waited at the tables, putting tureens of vegetable soup before us and dropping into our plates two boiled eggs, which were followed by a dish of potatoes and lentils, then by an endive salad, and finally by discs of camembert, to be eaten with excellent bread from the Abbey bakery. Every now and then a monk left his place, and knelt for a few minutes before the Abbot's table. At a sign from the Abbot, he would rise, make a deep bow, and withdraw. . . . Inspired probably by Victorian oleographs of monastic life, I had expected a prodigious flow of red wine. The metal jugs on our tables contained, alas, only water.

The recitation had now changed from Latin to French, delivered in the same sepulchral, and, to me, largely unintelligible, monotone. A few proper names emerged—Louis Phillipe, Dupanloup, Lacordaine, Guizot, Thiers, Gambetta, Montalembert—and it was clear that we were listening to a chapter of French nineteenth-century history. This stilted manner of treating a lay text sounded absurd at first and oddly sanctimonious; its original object, I discovered, had been both to act as a curb on histrionic vanity and to minimise the difficulties of the unlearned reader in the days of St. Benedict. Throughout the entire meal no other word was spoken. The tables were cleared, and the monks, their eyes downcast, sat with their hands crossed beneath their scapulars. The Abbot thereupon gave a sharp tap with a little mallet; the reader, abandoning his text, bowed so low over the balustrade that it seemed that he would fall out, and intoned the words *Tu autem Domine miserere nobis*; all rose, and bowing to a rectangular position with their hands crossed on their knees, chanted a long thanksgiving. Straightening, they turned and bowed to the Abbot and, still chanting, moved slowly out of the refectory in double file around two sides of the cloisters, into the church and up the central aisle. Here each pair of monks genuflected, inclined their heads one to another, and made their way to opposite stalls. The chanting continued for about eight minutes, then the entry was gravely reversed. As they reached the cloisters, the files of black figures broke up and dispersed throughout the Abbey.

Back in my cell, I sat down before the new blotter and pens and pieces of clean foolscap. I had asked for quiet and solitude and peace, and here it was; all I had to do now was to write. But an hour passed, and nothing happened. It began to rain over the woods outside, and a mood of depression and of unspeakable loneli-

ness suddenly felled me like a hammer-stroke. On the inner side of my door, the printed 'rules for the guests' wing' contained a mass of cheerless information. The monks' day, I learned, began at 4 a.m., with the offices of Matins and Lauds, followed by periods for private masses and reading and meditation. A guest's day began at 8.15 with the office of Primes and breakfast in silence. At 10 the Conventual High Mass was sandwiched between Tierce and Sext. Luncheon at 1. Nones and Vespers at 5 p.m. Supper at 7.30, then, at 8.30, Compline and to bed in silence at 9. All meals, the rules pointed out, were eaten in silence: one was enjoined to take one's 'recreation' apart, and only to speak to the monks with the Abbot's permission: not to make a noise walking about the Abbey: not to smoke in the cloisters: to talk in a low voice, and rigorously to observe the periods of silence. They struck me as impossibly forbidding. So much silence and sobriety! The place assumed the character of an enormous tomb, a necropolis of which I was the only living inhabitant.

The first bell was already ringing for vespers, and I went down to the cloisters and watched the monks assemble in silence for their processional entrance. They had put on, over their habits and scapulars, black *coules*—flowing gowns with hoods into which those of their ordinary habits fitted, and so voluminous that the wearers appeared to glide rather than walk. Their hands were invisible in the folds of their sleeves, and the stooped faces, deep in the tunnel of their pointed hoods, were almost completely hidden. A wonderful garb for anonymity! They were exact echoes of Mrs. Radcliffe's villainous monastics, and of the miscreants of Protestant anti-popish literature. Yet they looked not so much sinister as desperately sad. Only in the refectory and the church was I able to see their faces; and, as I sat at vespers watching them, now cowed, now uncovered, according to the progress of the liturgy, they appeared preternaturally pale, some of them nearly green. The bone-structure of their faces lay nearly always close beneath the surface. But, though a deep hollow often accentuated the shadow under the cheekbone, their faces were virtually without a wrinkle, and it was this creaseless haggardness that made their faces so distinct from any others. How different, I thought, from the fierce, whiskered, brigand-faces of the Greek monks of Athos or Meteora, whose eyes smoulder and flash and twinkle under brows that are always tied up in knots of rage or laughter or concentration, or suddenly relaxed into bland, Olympian benevolence. The gulf between the cenobites of Rome and those of Byzantium was often in my mind. A cowed figure would flit past in silence, and



all at once, with a smile, I would remember Fathers Dionysios and Gabriel, Brothers Theophylaktos, Christ and Polycarp, my bearded, long-haired, cylinder-hatted, war-time hosts and protectors in Crete, pouring out raki, cracking walnuts, singing mountain songs, stripping and assembling pistols, cross-questioning me interminably about Churchill, and snoring under olive trees while the sun's beams fell perpendicularly on the Libyan Sea. . . . But here, in the Abbey's boreal shadows, there was never a smile or a frown. No seismic shock of hilarity or anger or fear could ever, I felt, have disturbed the tranquil geography of those monastic features. Their eyelids were always downcast; and, if now and then they were raised, no treacherous glint appeared, nothing but a sedulously cultivated calmness, withdrawal and *mansuetudo*, and occasionally an expression of remote and burnt-out melancholy. The muted light in the church suspended a filament between us, reproducing the exact atmosphere of an early seventeenth-century Spanish studio in which—tonsured, waxen, austere and exsanguinous—were bowed in prayer the models of Zurbarán and Greco. Not for nothing had these painters followed so closely after St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, and so faithfully portrayed the external stigmata of monastic obedience, prayer, meditation, mortification and mystical experiment—the traces left by the soul's dark night, by the scaling of heavenly mountains and the exploration of interior mansions. As the monks dispersed after vespers and, a few hours later, after compline, I had a sensation of the temperature of life falling to zero, the blood running every second thinner and slower, as if the heart might in the end imperceptibly stop beating. These men really lived as if each day were their last, at peace with the world, shriven, fortified by the sacraments, ready at any moment to cease upon the midnight with no pain. Death, when it came, would be the easiest of change-overs. The silence, the appearance, the complexion and the gait of ghosts they had already; the final step would be only a matter of detail. 'And then,' I continued to myself, 'when the golden gates swing open with an angelic fanfare, what happens then? Won't these quiet people feel lost among streets paved with beryl and sardonyx and jacinth? After so many years of retirement, they would surely prefer eternal twilight and a cypress or two. . . .' The Abbey was now fast asleep but it seemed ridiculously early—about the moment when friends in Paris (whom I suddenly and acutely missed) were still uncertain where to dine. Having finished a flask of Calvados, which I had bought in Rouen, I sat at my desk in a condition of overwhelming gloom and *accidie*. As I looked

round the white box of my cell, I suffered what Pascal declared to be the cause of all human evils.

\* \* \*

The history of the Abbey of St. Wandrille typifies French religious and secular life through nearly three-quarters of the Christian era. Early chronicles still in existence, and the famous *Gesta Abbatorum*, tell of its beginnings when the north of France was divided up into the shadowy realms of Neustria and Austrasia—regions of forest and swamp which only the wolves and wild boar inhabited. The full name of the monastery is L'Abbaye de St. Wandrille de Fontanelle, linking together its saintly founder and the little river—*ruissel et fontaine de merveilleuse beauté*—on whose banks, in A.D. 649, Wandrille, with a handful of monks, cleared the forest and built the first conventual buildings. Wandrille came of a family of some standing. He was a cousin of Pepin the Old and of the Mayor of the Austrasian palace, and himself began life as a courtier of King Dagobert. But he abandoned the court and the prospect of a splendid marriage, and wandered south from monastery to monastery, remaining a number of years in the cloisters of St. Columbanus, the stern Irish Abbot of Bobbio in Cisalpine Gaul. Bobbio he only abandoned to found the Abbey that bears his name. Here, after performing countless miracles and casting out numbers of devils, he died in an odour of sanctity. The Abbey grew and prospered and no fewer than seventeen of his successors were canonised. During the abbacy of St. Hugh, nephew of the Charles Martel who drove the Moors from south-west France about half a century before the reign of Charlemagne, the Abbey reached its territorial apogee; for St. Hugh, besides being abbot of the great foundation of Jumièges, was archbishop of Rouen and bishop of Paris and Bayeux, and the Abbey possessed parishes and priories all over the north of France, and as far afield as Burgundy and even Provence. From that time, the fortunes of the Abbey varied in the hands of succeeding abbots. Sometimes this dignitary was more of a warrior than a cleric, a figure in chain-armour adept at archery and swordsmanship rather than at his pastoral office; and sometimes a great ecclesiastic, inspired by whose unction and zeal the Abbey became a centre of scholarship, founding schools, enlarging the library, and illuminating and transcribing manuscripts. In the ninth century the wing- and horn-helmeted Normans arrived in narrow ships from Scandinavia, and conquered and laid waste the whole of the region. The Abbey was soon a ruin, and the monks wandered for a century with no

possessions except the relics of their founders. But they were back by the middle of the tenth century, building the cloisters and church, and sending out monks to reform the relaxed community of Mont Saint-Michel. The Abbey lies in the heart of Duke William's recruiting ground for the invasion of England; and, after the conquest, St. Wandrille was endowed with four livings in England. (Incidentally, no specific Act ever having been passed to abolish the privilege, the present Abbot is still a canon of Salisbury Cathedral.) A terrible fire ravaged the Abbey in the thirteenth century; but from that time, building and expansion continued, spires and pinnacles soared into the sky; and, in 1395, Boniface IX bestowed on the Abbot and his successors the privilege of the mitre and crosier. The Abbey was in the centre of the dynastic troubles of the Plantagenets and the Valois; and during the Hundred Years War it was, to the detriment of religious discipline, less a convent than a citadel.

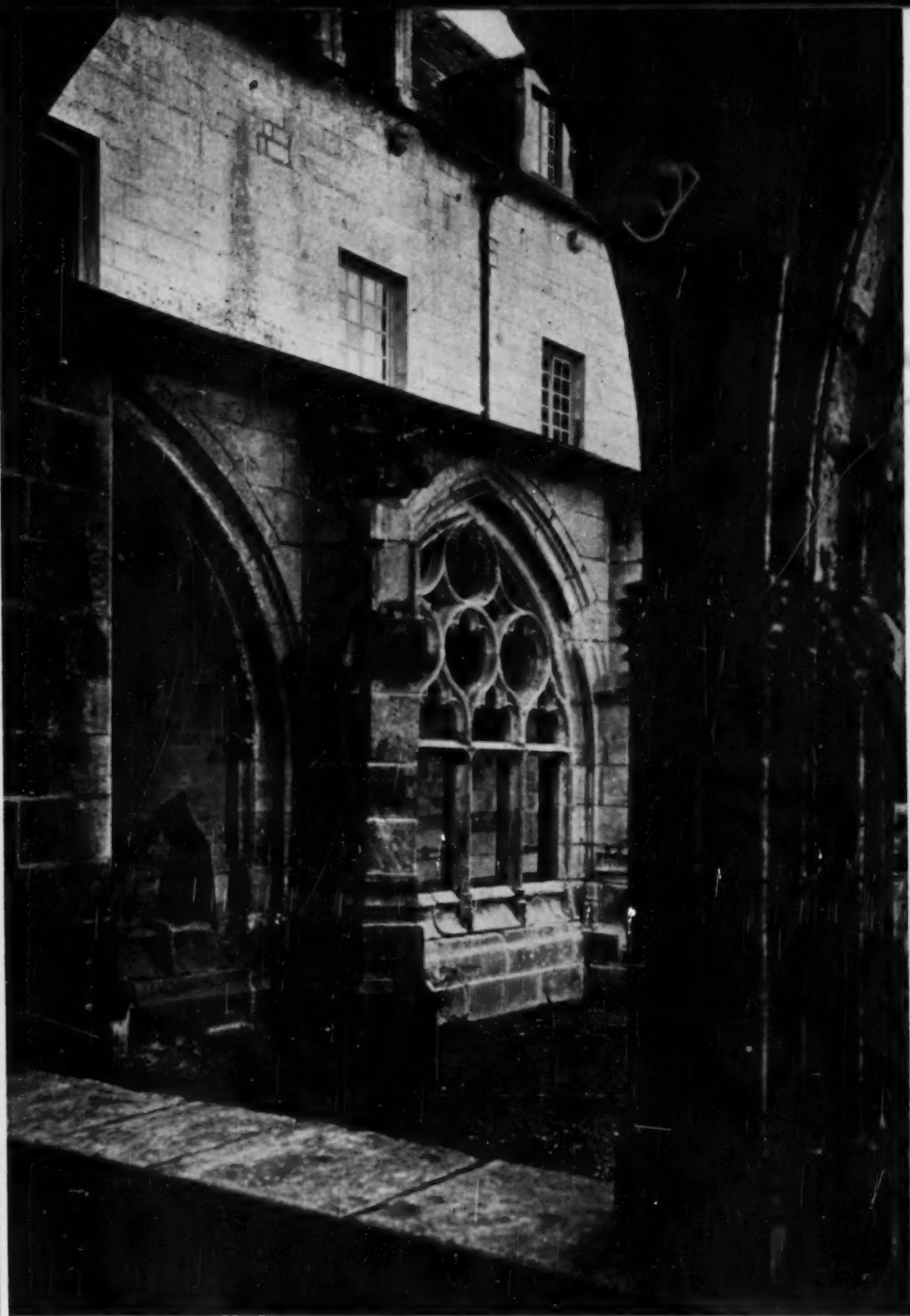
In 1502 the blight of Commendation, an evil whose effects on monastic life of France were as drastic as the phylloxera that centuries later ravaged her vineyards, fell upon St. Wandrille. By this system Commendatory abbots—courtiers who were never monks, and often not even in holy orders—received abbeys and priories as rewards for service to the State, or as the fruits of intrigue or nepotism, swallowing two-thirds of the monastic revenues, and seldom approaching their conventual fiefs closer than Versailles. St. Wandrille became the chattel of a series of absent grantees; yet somehow the monks succeeded in keeping their life and discipline intact. St. Wandrille seems to have been spared by none of the disasters of French history. She played her part in the Fronde and the Religious wars, and in 1562 was desecrated and pillaged by the Huguenots of Montgomery. In 1631, three hundred years almost to a day after its erection, the Gothic belfry collapsed, and, at about the same time, the reforms of the Maurists were imported to the Abbey: a measure that bolstered up the morale of the monks through the period of philosophic doubt that followed. The Abbey had fallen a victim to every material calamity, but, from the dangers of Port Royal, Jansenism, Quietism and Gallicanism, its orthodoxy emerged unscathed.

With the French Revolution came the abolition of all the religious houses of France. The monks were scattered, the library was split up and auctioned, and the conventual buildings were sold. Most of the old Abbey church was pulled down, and the masonry carted off and disposed of by the ton as building material. In 1863 the property was bought and reconstituted—romantically and often

most unsuitably—by an Irishman called the Marquis, and later the Duke, de Stacpoole, who belonged to a family of Irish landowners with a curious knack for acquiring foreign titles, his father having been created a viscount and count by Louis XVIII, and marquis and duke by Popes Leo XII and Gregory XVI. This curious nobleman eventually took holy orders and became a Monsignor and a domestic chaplain to the Pope; and the oldest villagers still just remember the Union Jack flying from the Abbey walls during the German occupation that followed the Franco-Prussian war. By 1894, after nearly a century's absence, the Benedictines had returned to their old home under the abbacy of the famous Dom Joseph Pothier, one of the great pioneers in the restoration of Gregorian plain-song. But in 1901, the anti-monastic legislation of the French Government, launched by the politician derisively known as *le Petit Père Combe*, again emptied the abbeys of France. The monks of St. Wandrille found refuge in Belgium, and the Abbey was once more in the hands of strangers. Its last secular inhabitants were Maurice Maeterlinck and Georgette Leblanc, and during their tenancy it became the background for elaborate semi-amateur theatricals. *Macbeth* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* were performed by torchlight in the cloisters and refectory, and Maeterlinck, in pursuit of inspiration, smoking furiously and followed by a barking cascade of terriers, would career all morning long round the cloisters on roller-skates. . . . By 1930, however, the monks were reinstated. Many—for the French constitution admits no exemption for the occupants of religious houses—were called up at the outbreak of war to serve as officers, non-commissioned officers and men. The remainder continued to keep the Abbey going throughout the occupation. During the liberation of Normandy, St. Wandrille was in the thick of the battle area, and part of the seventeenth-century buildings were destroyed by Allied bombs. Sixty or seventy choir-monks and lay-brothers—representatives, after exactly thirteen centuries, of a monastic brotherhood that nothing seems to be able to destroy—now inhabit, as if nothing had ever ruffled the quiet rhythm of their history, the ancient buildings; and at their head reigns the Abbot who had bade me welcome in the refectory, *le Révérendissime Père Abbé* Dom Gabriel Gontard, seventy-eighth successor of St. Wandrille.

\* \* \*

My first feelings in the monastery changed: I lost the sensation of circumambient and impending death, of being by mistake locked up in a catacomb. I think the alteration must have taken



ST. WANDRILLE : A CLOISTER.

*(Photographs by kind permission of M. le Curé Bretocq, Rosaie-sur-Lieuvre, Eure.)*





ST. WANDRILLE : SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY STAIRCASE.



RUINS OF THE MEDIEVAL ABBEY.



A GARDEN GATE AT ST. WANDRILLE.

about four days. The mood of dereliction persisted some time, a feeling of loneliness and flatness that always accompanies the transition from urban excess to a life of rustic solitude. Here in the Abbey, in absolutely unfamiliar surroundings, this miserable bridge-passage was immensely widened. One is prone to accept the idea of monastic life as a phenomenon that has always existed, and to dismiss it from the mind without further analysis or comment; only by living for a while in a monastery can one quite grasp its staggering difference from the ordinary life that we lead. The two ways of life do not share a single attribute; and the thoughts, ambitions, sounds, light, time and mood that surround the inhabitants of a cloister are not only unlike anything to which one is accustomed, but in some curious way, its exact reverse. The period during which normal standards recede and the strange new world becomes reality is slow, and, at first, acutely painful.

To begin with, I slept badly at night, and fell asleep during the day, felt restless alone in my cell, and depressed by the lack of alcohol, the disappearance of which had caused a sudden halt in the customary monsoon. The most remarkable preliminary symptoms were the variations of my need of sleep. After initial spells of insomnia, nightmare and falling asleep by day, I found that my capacity for sleep was becoming more and more remarkable: till the hours I spent in or on my bed vastly outnumbered the hours I spent awake; and my sleep was so profound that I might have been under the influence of some hypnotic drug. For two days, meals and the offices in the church—mass, vespers and compline—were almost my only lucid moments. Then began an extraordinary transformation: my extreme lassitude dwindled to nothing; night shrank to five hours of light, dreamless and perfect sleep, followed by awakenings full of energy and limpid freshness. The explanation is simple enough: the desire for talk, movement and nervous expression that I had transported from Paris found, in this silent place, no response or foil, evoked no single echo; after miserably gesticulating for a while in a vacuum, it languished, and finally died for lack of any nourishment. Then the tremendous accumulation of tiredness, which must be the common property of all our contemporaries, broke loose and swamped everything. No demands, once I had emerged from that flood of sleep, were made upon my nervous energy: there were no automatic drains, such as conversation at meals, small talk, catching trains, or the hundred anxious trivialities that poison everyday life. Even the major causes of guilt and anxiety had slid away into some distant limbo, and not only failed to emerge in the small hours

as tormentors, but appeared to have lost their dragonish validity. This new dispensation left nineteen hours a day of absolute and god-like freedom. Work became easier every moment ; and, when I was not working, I was either exploring the Abbey and the neighbouring countryside, or reading. The Abbey became the reverse of a tomb—not, indeed, a Thelema or Nepenthe, but a silent university, a country house, a castle hanging in mid-air, beyond the reach of ordinary troubles and vexations. A verse from the office of compline expresses the same thought ; and it was no doubt an unconscious memory of it that prompted me to put it down : *Altissimum posuisti refugium tuum . . . non accedet ad te malum et flagellum non appropinquabit tabernaculo tuo.*

Slowly, the monks changed from two-dimensional figures on counter-reformation canvasses, and became real people, though the guest-master remained almost my only interlocuter. This sympathetic figure, Father Tierce, lived in the guest-house, and was at first my sole link with the monastic life around me. In the rule of St. Benedict, the offices of guest-master and cellarer are, after the rank of abbot and prior, those that call for the solidest faith and character, since they bring the holder into daily and hourly contact with the influences and distractions of the outside world. My particular friend was a compendium of charity and unselfishness, whose one study appeared to be the happiness and comfort of his charges ; finding places for them during the services, seeing that their cells were comfortable, warning them of meal-times, and generally steering them through all the reefs and shallows of the monastic routine ; beaming through horn-rimmed spectacles, then always bustling away with a swirl of robes on some benevolent errand. It was he who put me in the hands of the librarian, a young and elaborately-educated choir-monk, who made me free of a vast book-lined labyrinth, occupying the whole of a seventeenth-century wing. The library was beautifully kept, and, considering the Abbey's vicissitudes, enormous. Vellum-bound folios and quartos receded in vistas, and thousands of ancient and modern works on theology, canon law, dogma, patrology, patristics, hagiography, mysticism and even magic, and almost as many on secular history, art and travel. Poetry, drama, heraldry, the whole of Greek and Roman literature, a special library on the history and geography of Normandy, an extremely rich and up-to-date reference library, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac and Chaldean and hundreds of English books completed the catalogue. The father librarian gave me a key, and his permission to take as many books as I liked to my cell. Like all monastic libraries it possessed a number



of volumes that had been placed on the index because they offended against theological orthodoxy ; and a number, considered damaging to the peace of monastic life, were locked up in a depository known as the *Enfer*. On various occasions, following up trains of enquiry, I asked for books from both sources, and obtained them without difficulty. Several monks were usually working in the library, reading and writing at the desks, or climbing the ladders in pursuit of recondite knowledge.

As, gradually, I found myself talking to them, I was surprised by the conversation of the monks with whom I came in contact. I found no trace of the Dark Ages here, no hint of necropolitan gloom or bigotry, still less of the ghastly breeziness that is such an embarrassing characteristic of many English clerics. There was no doubt of the respect in which they held the cause to which their lives were devoted ; but their company was like that of any civilised well-educated Frenchman, with all the balance, erudition and wit that one expected, the only difference being a gentleness, a lack of haste, and a calmness which is common to the whole community. Seeing them at their devotions and in silence at meals, I had imagined them to be almost incapable of laughter, of curiosity or any of the more ordinary manifestations of personal feeling.

After the first postulate of belief, without which the life of a monk would be farcical and intolerable, the dominating factor of monastic existence is a belief in the necessity and efficacy of prayer ; and it is only by attempting to grasp the importance of this principle—a principle so utterly remote from every tendency of modern secular thought—to the monks who practise it, that one can hope to understand the basis of monasticism. This is especially true of the 'contemplative' orders, like the Benedictines, Carthusians, Carmelites, Cistercians, Camaldulense and Sylvestrines ; for the others—like the Franciscans, Dominicans or the Jesuits—are brotherhoods organised for action. They travel, teach, preach, convert, organise, plan, heal and nurse ; and the material results they achieve make them, if not automatically admirable, at least comprehensible to the Time-Spirit. They get results ; they deliver the goods. But what (the Time-Spirit asks) what good do the rest do, immured in monasteries far from all contact with the world ? The answer is—if the truth of the Christian religion and the efficacy of prayer are both dismissed as baseless—no more than any other human beings who lead a good life, make (as they support themselves) no economic demands on the community, harm no one and respect their neighbours. But, should the two principles be admitted—particularly, for the purposes of this par-

ticular theme, the latter—their power for good is incalculable. Belief in this power, and in the necessity of worshipping God daily and hourly, are the mainsprings of Benedictine life. It was this belief that, in the sixth century, drove St. Benedict into the solitude of a cave in the Sabine gorges and, after three years of private *ascesis*, prompted him to found the first Benedictine communities. His book, *The Rule of St. Benedict*—seventy-three short and sagacious chapters explaining the theory and codifying the practice of the cenobitic life—is aimed simply at securing for his monks protection against the world, so that nothing should interfere with the utmost exploitation of this enormous force. The triple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience were destined to snite from these men all fetters that chained them to the world, to free them for action, for the worship of God and the practice of prayer ; for the pursuit, in short, of sanctity. Worship found its main expression, of course, in the Mass ; but the offices of the seven canonical hours—Matins, Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones, Vespers and Compline—a cycle that begins in the small hours of the night and finishes after sunset—kept, and keep, the monks as it were on parade, with an almost military rigour. Their programme for the day involves three-and-a-half or four hours in church. But other periods, quite separate from the time devoted to study, are set aside for the reading of the martyrology in the chapter-house, for self-examination, private prayer and meditation. One has only to glance at the mass of devotional and mystical works which have appeared throughout the Christian era, to get an idea of the difficulty, the complexity, the pitfalls and the rewards of this form of spiritual exercise. However strange these values may appear to the *homme moyen sensuel*, such are the pursuits that absorb much of a monk's life. They range from a repetition of the simpler prayers, sometimes tallied by the movement of beads through the fingers, to an advanced intellectual skill in devotion and meditation ; and occasionally rise to those hazardous mystical journeys of the soul which culminate, at the end of the purgative and illuminative periods, in blinding moments of union with the Godhead ; experiences which the poverty of language compels the mystics who experience them to describe in the terminology of profane love : a kind of personal, face-to-face intimacy, the very inkling of which, since Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, Quarles and Donne wrote their poems, has drained away from life in England. With this daily, unflagging stream of worship, a volume of prayer ascends, of which, if it is efficacious, we are all the beneficiaries. Between people pledged to those spiritual allegiances, ' *Pray for*

*me* ' and ' *Give me your blessing* ' are no polite formulæ, but requests for definite, effective acts. And it is easy to imagine the value and fame, before the growth of scepticism, of men whose lives were spent hammering out in silent factories these imponderable but priceless benefits. They are the anonymous well-wishers who reduce the moral overdraft of mankind, *les paratonnerres* (as Huysmans says) *de la société*. Life, for a monk, is shorter than the flutter of an eyelid in comparison to eternity, and this fragment of time flits past in the worship of God, the salvation of his soul, and in humble intercession for the souls of his fellow exiles from felicity.

Their values have remained stable, those of the world have passed through kaleidoscopic changes. It is curious, from the outside world in the throes of its yearly metamorphoses, to hear cries of derision levelled at the monastic life. How shallow, whatever views may be held concerning the fundamental truth or fallacy of the Christian religion, are these accusations of hypocrisy, sloth, selfishness and escapism ! The life of monks passes in a state of white-hot conviction and striving to which there is never a holiday ; and no living man, after all, is in a position to declare their premises true or false. They have foresworn the pleasures and rewards of a world whose values they consider meaningless ; and they alone have as a body confronted the terrifying problem of eternity, abandoning everything to help their fellow-men and themselves to meet it.

Worship, then, and prayer are the *raison d'être* of the Benedictine order ; and anything else, even their great achievements as scholars and architects and doctors of the church, is subsidiary. They were, however, for centuries the only guardians of literature, the classics, scholarship and the humanities in a world of which the confusion can best be compared to our own atomic era. For a long period, after the great epoch of Benedictine scholarship at Cluny, the Maurist Benedictine Abbey of St. Germain des Près was the most important residuary of learning and science in Europe—only a few ivy-clad ruins remain, just visible between *zazou* suits and existentialist haircuts from the terrace of the Deux Magots. But in scores of abbeys all over Europe, the same liberal traditions survive and prosper. Other by-products of their life were the beautiful buildings in which I was living, and the unparalleled calm that prevailed there. At St. Wandrille I was inhabiting at last a tower of solid ivory, and I, not the monks, was the escapist. For my hosts, the Abbey was a springboard into eternity ; for me a retiring place to write a book and spring more effectively

back into the maelstrom. Strange that the same habitat should prove favourable to ambitions so glaringly opposed !

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Conventual High Mass was at 10 every morning, immediately after Tierce. The beginning of this office was austere enough : the same silent entry of the monks, the same taking up of positions in the stalls that I had seen the first day at vespers. At a tap from the Abbot, the monks stooped almost double in silent prayer, their rows of tonsures appearing for a minute on either side of the aisle like tiers of discs. (Their heads were shaved once a fortnight. One day their scalps were as blue and overgrown as burglars' jowls ; the next freshly pollarded and gleaming in their circles of hair.) All the canonical hours began in the same way : '*Deus in adjutorium,*' the Abbot's voice sang on one note, '*intende.*' '*Domine,*' the monks intoned in unison, '*ad adjuvandum me festina.*' A hymn followed, one of those short poems with four-line verses in the Latin of the early church, sung to an unseizable little tune. Then, sitting back in their stalls, the monks chanted the morning psalms in antiphony, the Gregorian music booming from opposite sides of the chapel as each verse of St. Jerome's Latin succeeded its forerunner. Tierce ended, the officiating monk entered in his vestments, and the deacon and subdeacon, the acolytes and torchbearers. They genuflected together, and the mass began. Every moment the ceremony gained in splendour. If it was the feast of a great saint, the enthroned abbot was arrayed by his myrmidons in the pontificalia. A gold mitre was placed on his head, and the gloved hand that held the crosier was jewelled at the point of the stigmata, and on the third finger, the great ring sparkled over the fabric. The thurifer approached the celebrant, and a column of incense climbed into the air, growing and spreading like an elm-tree of smoke across the shafts of sunlight. The chanting became steadily more complex, led by a choir of monks who stood in the middle of the aisle, their voices limning chants that the black Gregorian block-notes, with their comet-like tails and Moorish-looking arabesques, wove and reweave across the threads of the antique four-line clef on the pages of their graduals. Then, with a quiet solemnity, the monks streamed into the cloister in the wake of a jewelled cross. Slowly they proceeded through the cylinders of gold into which the Gothic tracery cut the sunlight. Their footfalls made no noise, and only the ring of the crosier on the flags and the clanging of the censer could be heard across the Gregorian. The procession reached the shadow-side, pausing a few minutes, while the sixty voices sailed

out over the tree-tops ; and then back through the church door, where arcs and parentheses of smoke from the burning gums, after the sunlit quadrangle, deepened the vaulted shadows. The anti-phonal singing from the stalls continued to build its invisible architecture of music : a scaffolding that sent columns of plain-song soaring upwards, to be completed by an anthem from the choir that roofed it like a canopy. The anthem was followed by a long stillness which seemed to be scooped out of the very heart of sound. After long minutes, a small bell rang, and then the great bell from the tower which told of the rites that were being celebrated and the mysterious events taking place ; and the heads of the monks fell as if one blow had scythed them away. Next, an unwinding, a decrescendo. The mass sang itself out, the kiss of peace passed like a whispered message down the stalls, the officiating court dispersed, and the vestments were removed. A monk extinguished the candles, the hoods went up, the Abbot intoned the opening verse of Sext, and still on the same note, the response came booming back. . . .

Since the collapse and spoliation of the great Gothic church, its purpose has been fulfilled by the seventeenth-century chapter-house. Here nothing broke the simplicity of white stone vaults and walls, nothing but the altar, a tall crucifix, the carved wooden stalls and the emblazoned throne of the Abbot. This severity gave immense emphasis to the splendour of the mass and the austerity of the offices between which it is bracketed ; but the lowness of the vaults is said to impair the effects of the Gregorian plain-song for which the Abbey is famous. St. Wandrille's only competitor is the Abbey of Solesmes in the west of France. Differences of opinion over certain musical details divide plain-song in France into two schools, each of which has its partisans. Both abbeys are famous not only for the splendour of their liturgy, but for its purity, and for the care with which all seventeenth- and eighteenth-century corruptions have been weeded out, so that in neither ritual is there anything that does not belong to the Church's golden age.

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Time passes in a monastery with disconcerting speed. Except for the great feasts of the church, there are no landmarks to divide it up except the cycle of the seasons ; and I found that days, and soon weeks, were passing almost unperceived. The speed of this temporal lapse is a phenomenon that every monk notices : six months, a year, fifteen years, a lifetime, are soon over ; and, as I found it easier to talk to them, the only regret I heard expressed



was that they had delayed so long in the world before coming to the Abbey. They came from very different backgrounds, many of them very young after finishing their *lycée* or university or after growing up on farms, others after years in business, as teachers, or as soldiers or sailors, officers in the Navy or the Merchant Service. They were recruited from widely different income groups; some had been married and widowed. The possibility of withdrawal during the long years of novitiate is constantly kept before their eyes, with the result that all who take their final vows are deeply convinced of their vocation. Finally, they become either choir-monks or lay brothers, the latter position being originally calculated to give postulants, whose education or temperament unfits them for the studies that the priesthood demands, the opportunity of sharing the monastic life. Lay brothers do not receive the tonsure, but wear their hair cropped close to the head, as do the novices, and are concerned mainly with the farm-life of their foundation, the fields and the cattle. As all the monasteries of France are unendowed, they have to keep going by their own efforts: every monastery has a subsidiary and purely lay function, which involves very hard work besides its other duties, and one in which all must participate. St. Wandrille manages to keep afloat by the manufacture and sale of boot-polish and *encaustiques* for cleaning machinery, and by running a printing press. I asked one of the monks how he could sum up, in a couple of words, his way of life. He paused a moment and said, '*Est-ce que vous avez jamais été amoureux?*' I said, yes. A large Fernandel smile spread across his face, '*Eh bien,*' he said, '*c'est exactement pareil*' . . .

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The Abbot's table, on its little platform at the end of the refectory, was shared by a second figure whose ring and pectoral cross distinguished him from the other monks. Dom Walser was his name—the former superior of the Abbey of Beuron, in the Hohen-zollern region of southern Germany, a large foundation housing several hundred monks. He had had the singular distinction of quarrelling with Hitler and the Nazi régime, immediately after their accession to power in 1933. He refused to participate in the plebiscite, preached sermons against the dictatorship, and was expelled from Germany at the end of the same year, finding refuge in St. Wandrille, where he finally took French citizenship. During the war he visited America, served as a chaplain in the American Army, made frequent broadcasts to German troops, and opened a seminary for priests among German prisoners of war in North

Africa : a tall, florid, bony, blue-eyed man, discoursing, behind the typewriter in his cell, with humour, gentleness, perception and, very occasionally, anger, about the politics and the movement of ideas in modern Europe. It was difficult to believe that he had been a monk for over forty years.

The uniquely visual relationship, to which the quiet custom of the Abbey at first limited my contact with the monks, compelled me again and again to seek my parallels in painting ; and Phillipe de Champagne, I decided, would have been the perfect delineator of the Abbot himself. *Le Révérendissime Père Abbé*, Dom Gabriel Gontard, possesses all the dignity, serenity and *allure* of a seventeenth-century ecclesiastical prince. My first clear impression of him, after the initial meeting in the refectory, was of the Abbot enthroned in the chapter-house, with a stole over his black habit, crosier in hand, and mitred. His tonsured flock lined three sides of an expanse of floor, in the middle of which two young men in plain clothes, one of them recently returned from Indo-China, lay prostrate, their foreheads against the marble. '*Quid petite ?*' the Abbot asked. '*Benedictionem tuam et ordines,*' came the answer. '*Surgite in nomine Domini.*' The two young men rose to a kneeling position. It was a *prise d'habit*, two novices taking their first vows. Their tweed jackets were removed, the novice-master invested them in the black robes, then slipped the scapulars over their heads. The ease, the gravity and the exquisite French of the homily that followed, the occasional citations from Latin, gave me a sudden understanding what it must have been to listen to Bossuet or Fénelon—especially the latter, in exile in the diocese where he ended his life ; Bossuet was too grandiloquent for the quiet tenour of this discourse—'*Rien ne change dans la vie monastique,*' he said towards the end. '*Chaque jour est pareil à l'autre, chaque année comme celle qui la précédait, et ainsi jusqu'à la mort. . .*'

When an abbot dies, his successor is elected by the choir-monks. His authority is absolute, and lasts till his death. He and his monks are exempt from the authority of the local prelates, and fall directly under the Holy See, where the general of the entire order has a permanent position in the Curia Romana. An abbot's office is thus one of the highest importance. He is individually responsible for the temporal and spiritual weal of his community, for its discipline and economy, and for its contact with the remainder of the church and the outside world. It was a relief, after all these considerations, to find that the superior of my Abbey was an accessible man. He had a gentle, rather diffident charm that kindled easily into eagerness over the subjects that interested him—theo-

logy, the inviolability of primitive ritual, architecture, the arts, mysticism, archæology and history. He is a famous scholar in the monastic world, and I remember with acute pleasure our walks under the chestnut trees among the ruins of the old Abbey church, and the quiet voice at my side expounding, with such lucidity, the nature of Grace, the intricacies of Aquinas and Bonaventura or the ontological and moral values of good and evil ; I can still see the charming smile, the donnish virtuosity, with which conflicting exegeses were confronted, demolished or reconciled. Often, as though it were a quite normal procedure, his voice would slide off *ex tempore* into the soft ecclesiastical Latin of the Vatican ; and this easy breathing back to life of a language so long dead gave me, each time it occurred, the same spasm of delight. There were other conversations, in his large panelled room, or searches in the library for some heraldic or historical detail connected with the early days of the Abbey—pleasant hours that a bell curtailed, when I would hurry off to the refectory, past the cell where I went to collect my letters each morning from the prior who was invariably reading the Old Testament from a large tome in Hebrew. Early in my stay I commented on the blessed relief from talk during so much of the day. 'Oui,' the Abbot said, '*c'est une chose merveilleuse. Dans le monde hors de nos murs, on fait un grand abus de la parole.*' I had been living in dread of an event which would have turned this restful place into an awkward, even an intolerable sojourn—direct enquiry about my own spiritual convictions. But as the days passed, and no uneasy encounter occurred, I saw that the danger was non-existent ; and I felt a fresh access of respect and gratitude to my hosts for their unconditional acceptance of a possible *giaour* in their midst, for their good manners and their charitable discretion.

Weeks passed, and the flawless weather of late summer melted into a clear, dry autumn. I spent much of my limitless leisure walking in the country round the Abbey. The forested hills of the demesne are cut up into long zig-zag rides, tunnels of beech that converge upon moss-covered urns supported by a single Doric pillar. Occasionally an archway appeared, carved with the Abbey's fleurs-de-lis and, in one of the alley-ways, a shallow alcove had been hewn out of the rock, carved in segments and painted with the just-decipherable signs of the Zodiac, to form a sort of giant sundial. Fallen leaves now muffled every footfall, and the smoke of bonfires rose through the moulting branches. Lost in the higher woods, the oratory of St. Saturnine, solid, stocky and Carolingian, suddenly arose ; and, as I looked out over the descending tree-

tops, I could see the Abbey buildings clustered like a city in the background of a tapestry. The rivulet of the Fontanelle flowed under bridges where the trout hovered motionless for hours in the cress-flowered stream, which meandered away through water meadows towards the Seine. Beyond, the grey buildings rose—the tall Norman refectory, the Duke de Stacpoole's fanciful arches, the Gothic quadrangular well of the cloisters, the high stone girdle of the Abbey pierced by the Abbé de Jarente's great doorway, scalloped and rococo. Then came the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century buildings, enclosing graceful staircases and wrought-iron balusters, crowned by triangular pediments whence scrolls overflowed, and symbols and flourishes; mansard roofs and a regiment of tall chimneys with their slanting smoke-plumes. The ruins of the Abbey church dominated everything: clustered piers—fifteen or twenty stalks of stone gathered in vast climbing sheaves—branched into broken segments of aisle and chancel-arches, a few pillars of the triforium ending in mid-air, a pillar or two of the clerestory. . . . Beyond I saw the timber and thatch of the village, and the vanishing wooded contours that, across the valley, corresponded to my vantage point. All these woods, though my footsteps never startled anything larger than a squirrel, still teem with wild boar. As it declined, the sun beat the grey Norman stone into thin edifices of gold; and, when dusk had swallowed them up, the buildings of the monastery were pierced by many gleaming windows—oblong and classical, Norman and rounded, or high tangles of Gothic tracery—as the Abbey prepared itself for the night.

Compline, the office that finishes the monastic day, belongs more than any of them to the world of the mediæval church. Only one lamp is lighted, enough for the monk who reads aloud from the Rule of St. Benedict or the Imitation of Christ. The faces of the seated monks are hidden in their hoods, their heads are bowed; and they themselves are only just discernible under the accumulation of shadows. The solitary voice reading aloud seems to issue from an inner silence, even greater than the silence that surrounds them. The reading comes to an end; the single light is extinguished; and the chanted psalms follow one another in total darkness. The whole service is a kind of precautionary exorcism of the terrors of the night, a warding-off of the powers of darkness, each word throwing up a barrier or shooting home a bolt against the prowling legions of the Evil One. '*Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi,*' the voices sing; '*et sub pennis ejus sperabis.*'

'*Scuto circumdabit te veritas ejus; non timebis a timore nocturno,*

'*A sagitta volante in die, a negotio perambulante in tenebris ab incursu et daemonio meridiano.*'

One by one the keys turn in the wards, the portcullises fall, the invisible drawbridges touch the battlements . . .

*Procul recedant somnia  
Et noctium phantasmata  
Hostemque nostrum comprime  
Ne polluantur corpora.*

The windows are barred against the lurking incubus, the pre-eighth-century iambic dimeters seal up any remaining loophole against the invasion of the hovering succubi. *Asperges me, domine hyssopo et mundabor, lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor.* After a long, silent prayer, the monks were roused by a soft tap from the Abbot, and the rustle of their habits as they left the church was the last human sound, until, again in pitch darkness, they re-assembled at four o'clock for matins. As I left, kneeling figures of the monks, grouped like compass points about the centre formed at an angle of the cloister by a fourteenth-century stone Madonna of great beauty (half of whose face had been sliced away by the Huguenots), cast long shadows down the colonnades. From my window I watched the lights in their cells go out one by one, and then settled down to fill the empty hours of the night, in front of the pile of manuscript, maps of the Caribbean islands, photographs of Central-American jungle and of the blank faces of Maya Indians.

The Abbey had emptied of guests, and I had been shifted into an enormous cell, which might have accommodated a Cardinal or an Elector, the very setting for a huge four-poster and an arras which represented Actæon being devoured by the hounds of Artemis. On the walls hung two sooty pictures—a near-Luini of St. Theresa, and a near-Murillo of the scourging of Christ. In the middle of the pink tiled floor stood a fluted Corinthian column of wood, which, three yards up, burst into a fluted capital, but supported nothing, as if it awaited a miniature stylite; part, no doubt, of some tremendous, now dismembered baldachino, erected in de Stacpoole's day. The windows were uncurtained, and there was nothing to hide the lovely shelving white planes that slanted through the thickness of the walls, and the ellipses of moulding at the top. It was a wonderful room to wake up in. Dreamless nights came to an end with no harder shock than that of a boat's keel grounding on a lake shore. Sunlight streamed in through the three tall windows and, as I lay in bed, all I could see was layer on ascending layer of chestnut leaves, like millions of



spatulate superimposed green hands, and the crystalline sky of October, framed by the thin reflected blue-white, or thick milk-white, or, where the sun struck, white-gold surfaces of the walls and window-arches and embrasures.

If my first days in the Abbey had been a period of depression, the unwinding process, after I had left, was ten times worse. The Abbey was at first a graveyard: the outer world seemed afterwards by contrast an inferno of noise and vulgarity, entirely populated by bounders and sluts and crooks. This state of mind, I saw, was, perhaps, as false as my first reactions to monastic life; but the admission did nothing to decrease its unpleasantness. From the train which took me back to Paris, even the advertisements for Byrrh and Cinzano seen from the window, usually such jubilant emblems of freedom and escape, had acquired the impact of personal insults. The process of adaptation—in reverse—had painfully to begin again.

## *Jug of Silver*

BY TRUMAN CAPOTE

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**A**FTER school I used to work in the Valhalla drugstore. It was owned by my uncle, Mr. Ed Marshall. I call him Mr. Marshall because everybody, including his wife, called him Mr. Marshall. Nevertheless he was a nice man.

This drugstore was maybe old-fashioned, but it was large and dark and cool: during summer months there was no pleasanter place in town. At the left, as you entered, was a tobacco-magazine counter behind which, as a rule, sat Mr. Marshall: a squat, square-faced, pink-fleshed man with looping, manly, white moustaches. Beyond this counter stood the beautiful soda fountain. It was very antique and made of fine, yellowed marble, smooth to the touch but without a trace of cheap glaze. Mr. Marshall bought it at an auction in New Orleans in 1910 and was plainly proud of it. When you sat on the high, delicate stools and looked across the fountain you could see yourself reflected softly, as though by candlelight, in a row of ancient, mahogany-framed mirrors. All general merchandise was displayed in glass-doored, curio-like cabinets that were locked with brass keys. There was always in the air the smell of syrup and nutmeg and other delicacies.

The Valhalla was the gathering place of Wachata County till a certain Rufus McPherson came to town and opened a second drugstore directly across the courthouse square. This old Rufus McPherson was a villain; that is, he took away my uncle's trade. He installed fancy equipment such as electric fans and coloured lights; he provided curb service and made grilled-cheese sandwiches to order. Naturally, though some remained devoted to Mr. Marshall, most folks couldn't resist Rufus McPherson.

For a while, Mr. Marshall chose to ignore him: if you were to mention McPherson's name he would sort of snort, finger his moustaches and look the other way. But you could tell he was mad. And getting madder. Then one day towards the middle of October I strolled into the Valhalla to find him sitting at the fountain playing dominoes and drinking wine with Hamurabi.

Hamurabi was an Egyptian and some kind of dentist, though he didn't do much business as the people hereabouts have unusually strong teeth, due to an element in the water. He spent a great deal of his time loafing around the Valhalla and was my uncle's chief

buddy. He was a handsome figure of a man, this Hamurabi, being dark-skinned and nearly seven feet tall; the matrons of the town kept their daughters under lock and key and gave him the eye themselves. He had no foreign accent whatsoever, and it was always my opinion that he wasn't any more Egyptian than the man in the moon.

Anyway, there they were swigging red Italian wine from a gallon jug. It was a troubling sight, for Mr. Marshall was a renowned teetotaler. So naturally, I thought: Oh, golly, Rufus McPherson has finally got his goat. That was not the case, however.

'Here, son,' said Mr. Marshall, 'come have a glass of wine.'

'Sure,' said Hamurabi, 'help us finish it up. It's store-bought, so we can't waste it.'

Much later, when the jug was dry, Mr. Marshall picked it up and said, 'Now we shall see!' And with that disappeared out into the afternoon.

'Where's he off to?' I asked.

'Ah,' was all Hamurabi would say. He liked to devil me.

A half-hour passed before my uncle returned. He was stooped and grunting under the load he carried. He set the jug atop the fountain and stepped back, smiling and rubbing his hands together.

'Well, what do you think?'

'Ah,' purred Hamurabi.

'Gee . . .' I said.

It was the same wine jug, God knows, but there was a wonderful difference; for now it was crammed to the brim with nickels and dimes that shone dully through the thick glass.

'Pretty, eh?' said my uncle. 'Had it done over at the First National. Couldn't get in anything biggersized than a nickel. Still, there's lotsa money in there, let me tell you.'

'But what's the point, Mr. Marshall?' I said. 'I mean, what's the idea?'

Mr. Marshall's smile deepened to a grin. 'This here's a jug of silver, you might say . . .'

'The pot at the end of the rainbow,' interrupted Hamurabi.

' . . . and the idea, as you call it, is for folks to guess how much money is in there. For instance, say you buy a quarter's worth of stuff—well, then you get to take a chance. The more you buy, the more chances you get. And I'll keep all guesses in a ledger till Christmas Eve, at which time whoever comes closest to the right amount will get the whole shebang.'

Hamurabi nodded solemnly. 'He's playing Santa Claus—a mighty crafty Santa Claus,' he said. 'I'm going home and write

a book : *The Skilful Murder of Rufus McPherson.* To tell the truth, he sometimes did write stories and send them out to the magazines. They always came back.

It was surprising, really like a miracle, how Wachata County took to the jug. Why, the Valhalla hadn't done so much business since Station Master Tully, poor soul, went stark raving mad and claimed to have discovered oil back of the depot, causing the town to be overrun with wildcat prospectors. Even the poolhall bums who never spent a cent on anything not connected with whisky or women took to investing their spare cash in milk shakes. A few elderly ladies publicly disapproved of Mr. Marshall's enterprise as a kind of gambling, but they didn't start any trouble and some even found occasion to visit us and hazard a guess. The school kids were crazy about the whole thing, and I was very popular because they figured I knew the answer.

'I'll tell you why all this is,' said Hamurabi, lighting one of the Egyptian cigarettes he bought by mail from a concern in New York City. 'It's not for the reason you may imagine; not, in other words, avidity. No. It's the mystery that's enchanting. Now you look at those nickels and dimes and what do you think: ah, *so* much! No, no. You think: ah, *how* much? And that's a profound question, indeed. It can mean different things to different people. Understand?'

And oh, was Rufus McPherson wild! When you're in trade, you count on Christmas to make up a large share of your yearly profit, and he was hard pressed to find a customer. So he tried to imitate the jug; but being such a stingy man he filled his with pennies. He also wrote a letter to the editor of *The Banner*, our weekly paper, in which he said that Mr. Marshall ought to be 'tarred and feathered and strung up for turning innocent little children into confirmed gamblers and sending them down the path to Hell!' You can imagine what kind of laughing stock he was. Nobody had anything for McPherson but scorn. And so by the middle of November he just stood on the sidewalk outside his store and gazed bitterly at the festivities across the square.

At about this time Appleseed and sister made their first appearance.

He was a stranger in town. At least no one could recall ever having seen him before. He said he lived on a farm a mile past Indian Branches; told us his mother weighed only seventy-four pounds and that he had an older brother who would play the fiddle

at anybody's wedding for fifty cents. He claimed that Appleseed was the only name he had and that he was twelve years old. But his sister, Middy, said he was eight. His hair was straight and dark yellow. He had a tight, weather-tanned little face with anxious green eyes that had a very wise and knowing look. He was small and puny and high-strung; and he wore always the same outfit: a red sweater, blue denim breeches and a pair of man-sized boots that went clomp-clomp with every step.

It was raining that first time he came into the Valhalla; his hair was plastered round his head like a cap and his boots were caked with red mud from the country roads. Middy trailed behind as he swaggered like a cowboy up to the fountain where I was wiping some glasses.

'I hear tell you folks got a bottle fulla money you fixin' to give 'way,' he said, looking me square in the eye. 'Seein' as you-all are givin' it away, we'd be obliged iffen you'd give it to us. Name's Appleseed, and this here's my sister, Middy.'

Middy was a sad, sad-looking kid. She was a good bit taller and older-looking than her brother: a regular bean pole. She had tow-coloured hair that was chopped short, and a pale pitiful little face. She wore a faded cotton dress that came way up above her bony knees. There was something wrong with her teeth, and she tried to conceal this by keeping her lips primly pursed like an old lady.

'Sorry,' I said, 'but you'll have to talk with Mr. Marshall.'

So sure enough he did. I could hear my uncle explaining what he would have to do to win the jug. Appleseed listened attentively, nodding now and then. Presently he came back and stood in front of the jug and, touching it lightly with his hand, said, 'Ain't it a pretty thing, Middy?'

Middy said, 'Is they gonna give it to us?'

'Naw. What you gotta do, you gotta guess how much money's inside there. And you gotta buy two bits' worth so's even to get a chance.'

'Huh, we ain't got no two bits. Where you 'spec we gonna get us two bits?'

Appleseed frowned and rubbed his chin. 'That'll be the easy part, just leave it to me. The only worrisome thing is: I can't just take a chance and guess. . . . I gotta know.'

Well, a few days later they showed up again. Appleseed perched on a stool at the fountain and boldly asked for two glasses of water, one for him and one for Middy. It was on this occasion that he gave out the information about his family: '. . . then there's Papa



Daddy, that's my mama's papa, who's a Cajun, an' on accounta that he don't speak English good. My brother, the one what plays the fiddle, he's been in jail three times. . . . It's on accounta him we had to pick up and leave Louisiana. He cut a fella bad in a razor fight over a woman ten years older'n him. She had yellow hair.'

Middy, lingering in the background, said nervously, 'You oughtn't to be tellin' our personal private fam'ly business thataway, Appleseed.'

'Hush now, Middy,' he said, and she hushed. 'She's a good little gal,' he added, turning to pat her head, 'but you can't let her get away with much. You go look at the picture books, honey, and stop frettin' with your teeth. Appleseed here's got some figurin' to do.'

This figuring meant staring hard at the jug, as if his eyes were trying to eat it up. With his chin cupped in his hand, he studied it for a long period, not batting his eyelids once. 'A lady in Louisiana told me I could see things other folks couldn't see 'cause I was born with a caul on my head.'

'It's a cinch you aren't going to see how much there is,' I told him. 'Why don't you just let a number pop into your head, and maybe that'll be the right one.'

'Uh, uh,' he said, 'too darn risky. Me, I can't take no sucha chance. Now, the way I got it figured, there ain't but one sure-fire thing and that's to count every nickel and dime.'

'Count!'

'Count what?' asked Hamurabi, who had just moseyed inside and was settling himself at the fountain.

'This kid says he's going to count how much is in the jug,' I explained.

Hamurabi looked at Appleseed with interest. 'How do you plan to do that, son?'

'Oh, by countin',' said Appleseed matter-of-factly.

Hamurabi laughed. 'You better have X-ray eyes, son, that's all I can say.'

'Oh, no. All you gotta do is be born with a caul on your head. A lady in Louisiana told me so. She was a witch; she loved me and when my ma wouldn't give me to her she put a hex on her and now my ma don't weigh but seventy-four pounds.'

'Ve-ry in-ter-esting,' was Hamurabi's comment as he gave Appleseed a queer glance.

Middy sauntered up, clutching a copy of *Screen Secrets*. She pointed out a certain photo to Appleseed and said: 'Ain't she the

nicest-lookin' lady? Now you see, Appleseed, you see how pretty her teeth are? Not a one outa joint.'

'Well, don't you fret none,' he said.

After they left Hamurabi ordered a bottle of orange Nehi and drank it slowly, while smoking a cigarette. 'Do you think maybe that kid's o.k. upstairs?' he asked presently in a puzzled voice.

Small towns are best for spending Christmas, I think. They catch the mood quicker and change and come alive under its spell. By the first week in December house doors were decorated with wreaths, and store windows were flashy with red paper bells and snowflakes of glittering isinglass. The kids hiked out into the woods and came back dragging spicy evergreen trees. Already the women were busy baking fruitcakes, unsealing jars of mincemeat and opening bottles of blackberry and scuppernong wine. In the courthouse square a huge tree was trimmed with silver tinsel and coloured electric bulbs that were lighted up at sunset. Late of an afternoon you could hear the choir in the Presbyterian church practising carols for their annual pageant. All over town the japonicas were in full bloom.

The only person who appeared not the least touched by this heartwarming atmosphere was Appleseed. He went about his declared business of counting the jug-money with great, persistent care. Every day now he came to the Valhalla and concentrated on the jug, scowling and mumbling to himself. At first we were all fascinated, but after a while it got tiresome and nobody paid him any mind whatsoever. He never bought anything, apparently having never been able to raise the two bits. Sometimes he'd talk to Hamurabi, who had taken a tender interest in him and occasionally stood treat to a jawbreaker or a penny's worth of liquorice.

'Do you still think he's nuts?' I asked.

'I'm not so sure,' said Hamurabi. 'But I'll let you know. He doesn't eat enough. I'm going to take him over to the Rainbow Cafe and buy him a plate of barbecue.'

'He'd appreciate it more if you'd give him a quarter.'

'No. A dish of barbecue is what he needs. Besides, it would be better if he never was to make a guess. A high-strung kid like that, so unusual, I wouldn't want to be the one responsible if he lost. Say, it would be pitiful.'

I'll admit that at the time Appleseed struck me as being just funny. Mr. Marshall felt sorry for him, and the kids tried to tease him, but had to give it up when he refused to respond. There you could see him plain as day sitting at the fountain with his forehead puckered

and his eyes fixed forever on that jug. Yet he was so withdrawn you sometimes had this awful creepy feeling that, well, maybe he didn't exist. And when you were pretty much convinced of this he'd wake up and say something like, 'You know, I hope a 1913 buffalo nickel's in there. A fella was tellin' me he saw where a 1913 buffalo nickel's worth fifty dollars.' Or, 'Middy's gonna be a big lady in the picture shows. They make lotsa money, the ladies in the picture shows do, and then we ain't gonna never eat another collard green as long as we live. Only Middy says she can't be in the picture shows 'less her teeth look good.'

Middy didn't always tag along with her brother. On those occasions when she didn't come, Appleseed wasn't himself; he acted shy and left soon.

Hamurabi kept his promise and stood treat to a dish of barbecue at the cafe. 'Mr. Hamurabi's nice, all right,' said Appleseed afterwards, 'but he's got peculiar notions: has a notion that if he lived in this place named Egypt he'd be a king or somethin'.'

And Hamurabi said, 'That kid has the most touching faith. It's a beautiful thing to see. But I'm beginning to despise the whole business.' He gestured towards the jug. 'Hope of this kind is a cruel thing to give anybody, and I'm damned sorry I was ever a party to it.'

Around the Valhalla the most popular pastime was deciding what you would buy if you won the jug. Among those who participated were: Solomon Katz, Phoebe Jones, Carl Kuhnhardt, Puly Simmons, Addie Foxcroft, Marvin Finkle, Trudy Edwards and a coloured man named Erskine Washington. And these were some of their answers: a trip to and a permanent wave in Birmingham, a second-hand piano, a Shetland pony, a gold bracelet, a set of *Rover Boys* books and a life insurance policy.

Once Mr. Marshall asked Appleseed what he would get. 'It's a secret,' was the reply, and no amount of prying could make him tell. We took it for granted that whatever it was, he wanted it real bad.

Honest winter, as a rule, doesn't settle on our part of the country till late January and then is mild, lasting only a short time. But in the year of which I write we were blessed with a singular cold spell the week before Christmas. Some still talk of it, for it was so terrible: water pipes froze solid; many folks had to spend the days in bed snuggled under their quilts, having neglected to lay in enough kindling for the fireplace; the sky turned that strange dull grey as it does just before a storm, and the sun was pale as a waning

moon. There was a sharp wind : the old dried-up leaves of last fall fell on the icy ground, and the evergreen tree in the courthouse square was twice stripped of its Christmas finery. When you breathed, your breath made smoky clouds. Down by the silk-mill where the very poor people lived, the families huddled together in the dark at night and told tales to keep their minds off the cold. Out in the country the farmers covered their delicate plants with gunny sacks and prayed ; some took advantage of the weather to slaughter their hogs and bring the fresh sausage to town. Mr. R. C. Judkins, our town drunk, outfitted himself in a red cheesecloth suit and played Santa Claus at the five 'n' dime. Mr. R. C. Judkins was the father of a big family, so everybody was happy to see him sober enough to earn a dollar. There were several church socials, at one of which Mr. Marshall came face to face with Rufus McPherson : bitter words were passed but not a blow was struck.

Now, as has been mentioned, Appleseed lived on a farm a mile below Indian Branches ; this would be approximately three miles from town ; a mighty long and lonesome walk. Still, despite the cold, he came every day to the Valhalla and stayed till closing time which, as the days had grown short, was after nightfall. Once in a while he'd catch a ride partway home with the foreman from the silk-mill, but not often. He looked tired, and there were worry lines about his mouth. He was always cold and shivered a lot. I don't think he wore any warm drawers underneath his red sweater and blue breeches.

It was three days before Christmas when out of the clear sky, he announced : ' Well, I'm finished. I mean I know how much is in the bottle.' He claimed this with such grave, solemn sureness it was hard to doubt him.

' Why, say now, son, hold on,' said Hamurabi, who was present. ' You can't know anything of the sort. It's wrong to think so : you're just heading to get yourself hurt.'

' You don't need to preach to me, Mr. Hamurabi. I know what I'm up to. A lady in Louisiana, she told me . . .'

' Yes yes yes—but you got to forget that. If it were me, I'd go home and stay put and forget about this goddamned jug.'

' My brother's gonna play the fiddle at a wedding over in Cherokee City tonight and he's gonna give me the two bits,' said Appleseed stubbornly. ' Tomorrow I'll take my chance.'

So the next day I felt kind of excited when Appleseed and Middy arrived. Sure enough, he had his quarter : it was tied for safe-keeping in the corner of a red bandanna.

The two of them wandered hand in hand among the showcases, holding a whispery consultation as to what to purchase. They decided finally on a thimble-sized bottle of gardenia cologne which Middy promptly opened and partly emptied on her hair. 'It smells like . . . Oh, darlin' Mary, I ain't never smelled nothin' as sweet. Here, Applesseed, honey, let me douse some on your hair.' But he wouldn't let her.

Mr. Marshall got out the ledger in which he kept his records, while Applesseed strolled over to the fountain and cupped the jug between his hands, stroking it gently. His eyes were bright and his cheeks flushed from excitement. Several persons who were in the drugstore at that moment crowded close. Middy stood in the background quietly scratching her leg and smelling the cologne. Hamurabi wasn't there.

Mr. Marshall licked the point of his pencil and smiled. 'Okay, son, what do you say?'

Applesseed took a deep breath. 'Seventy-seven dollars and thirty-five cents,' he blurted.

In picking such an uneven sum he showed originality, for the run-of-the-mill guess was a plain round figure. Mr. Marshall repeated the amount solemnly as he copied it down.

'When'll I know if I won?'

'Christmas Eve,' someone said.

'That's tomorrow, huh?'

'Why, so it is,' said Mr. Marshall, not surprised. 'Come at four o'clock.'

During the night the thermometer dropped even lower, and towards dawn there was one of those swift, summer-like rainstorms, so that the following day was bright and frozen. The town was like a picture postcard of a Northern scene, what with icicles sparkling whitely on the trees and frost flowers coating all window-panes. Mr. R. C. Judkins rose early and, for no clear reason, tramped the streets ringing a supper bell, stopping now and then to take a swig of whisky from a pint which he kept in his hip-pocket. As the day was windless, smoke climbed lazily from various chimneys straightway to the still, frozen sky. By mid-morning the Presbyterian choir was in full swing; and the town kids (wearing horror masks, as at Hallowe'en) were chasing one another round and round the square, kicking up an awful fuss.

Hamurabi dropped by at noon to help us fix up the Valhalla. He brought along a fat sack of Satsumas, and together we ate every last one, tossing the hulls into a newly installed potbellied stove



(a present from Mr. Marshall to himself) which stood in the middle of the room. Then my uncle took the jug off the fountain, polished and placed it on a prominently situated table. He was no help after that whatsoever, for he squatted in a chair and spent his time tying and retying a tacky green ribbon around the jug. So Hamurabi and I had the rest to do alone: we swept the floor and washed the mirrors and dusted the cabinets and strung streamers of red and green *crepe* paper from wall to wall. When we were finished it looked very fine and elegant.

But Hamurabi gazed sadly at our work, and said: 'Well, I think I better be getting along now.'

'Aren't you going to stay?' asked Mr. Marshall, shocked.

'No, oh, no,' said Hamurabi, shaking his head slowly. 'I don't want to see that kid's face. This is Christmas and I mean to have a rip-roaring time. And I couldn't, not with something like that on my conscience. Hell, I wouldn't sleep.'

'Suit yourself,' said Mr. Marshall. And he shrugged, but you could see he was really hurt. 'Life's like that—and besides, who knows, he might win.'

Hamurabi sighed gloomily. 'What's his guess?'

'Seventy-seven dollars and thirty-five cents,' I said.

'Now I ask you, isn't that fantastic?' said Hamurabi. He slumped in a chair next to Mr. Marshall and crossed his legs and lit a cigarette. 'If you got any Baby Ruths I think I'd like one; my mouth tastes sour.'

As the afternoon wore on, the three of us sat around the table feeling terribly blue. No one said hardly a word and, as the kids had deserted the square, the only sound was the clock tolling the hour in the courthouse steeple. The Valhalla was closed to business, but people kept passing by and peeking in the window. At three o'clock Mr. Marshall told me to unlock the door.

Within twenty minutes the place was jam full; everyone was wearing his Sunday best, and the air smelled sweet, for most of the little silk-mill girls had scented themselves with vanilla flavouring. They scrunched up against the walls, perched on the fountain, squeezed in wherever they could; soon the crowd had spread to the sidewalk and stretched into the road. The square was lined with team-drawn wagons and Model T Fords that had carted farmers and their families into town. There was much laughter and shouting and joking—several outraged ladies complained of the cursing and the rough, shoving ways of the younger men, but nobody left. At the side entrance a gang of coloured folks had formed and were

having the most fun of all. Everybody was making the best of a good thing. It's usually so quiet around here : nothing much ever happens. It's safe to say that nearly all of Wachata County was present but invalids and Rufus McPherson. I looked around for Appleseed but didn't see him anywhere.

Mr. Marshall harumphed, and clapped for attention. When things quieted down and the atmosphere was properly tense, he raised his voice like an auctioneer, and called : ' Now listen, everybody, in this here envelope you see in my hand '—he held a manila envelope above his head—' well, in it's the *answer*—which nobody but God and the First National Bank knows up to now, ha, ha. And in this book '—he held up the ledger with his free hand—' I've got written down what you folks guessed. Are there any questions?' All was silence. ' Fine. Now, if we could have a volunteer . . . '

Not a living soul budged an inch : it was as if an awful shyness had overcome the crowd, and even those who were ordinarily natural-born show-offs shuffled their feet, ashamed. Then a voice, Appleseed's, hollered, ' Lemme by . . . Outa the way, please, ma'am.' Trotting along behind as he pushed forward were Middy and a lanky, sleepy-eyed fellow who evidently was the fiddling brother. Appleseed was dressed the same as usual, but his face was scrubbed rosy clean, his boots polished and his hair slicked back skin tight with Stacomb. ' Did we get here in time?' he panted.

But Mr. Marshall said, ' So you want to be our volunteer?' Appleseed looked bewildered, then nodded vigorously.

' Does anybody have an objection to this young man? '

Still there was dead quiet. Mr. Marshall handed the envelope to Appleseed who accepted it calmly. He chewed his under lip while studying it a moment before ripping the flap.

In all that congregation there was no sound except an occasional cough and the soft tinkling of Mr. R. C. Judkins' supper-bell. Hamurabi was leaning against the fountain, staring up at the ceiling; Middy was gazing blankly over her brother's shoulder, and when he started to tear open the envelope she let out a pained little gasp.

Appleseed withdrew a slip of pink paper and, holding it as though it was very fragile, muttered to himself whatever was written there. Suddenly his face paled and tears glistened in his eyes.

' Hey, speak up, boy,' someone hollered.

Hamurabi stepped forward and all but snatched the slip away. He cleared his throat and commenced to read when his expression changed most comically. ' Well, Mother o' God . . . ' he said.

' Louder! Louder!' an angry chorus demanded.

' Buncha crooks!' yelled Mr. R. C. Judkins, who had a snootful

by this time. 'I smell a rat and he smells to high heaven!' Whereupon a cyclone of catcalls and whistling rent the air.

Appleseed's brother whirled round and shook his fist. 'Shuddup, shuddup 'fore I bust every one a your goddamn heads together so's you got knots the size a musk melons, hear me?'

'Citizens,' cried Mayor Mawes, 'citizens—I say, this is Christmas . . . I say . . .'

And Mr. Marshall hopped up on a chair and clapped and stamped till a minimum of order was restored. It might as well be noted here that we later found out Rufus McPherson had paid Mr. R. C. Judkins to start the rumpus. Anyway, when the outbreak was quelled, who should be in possession of the slip but me . . . don't ask how.

Without thinking, I shouted, 'Seventy-seven dollars and thirty-five cents.' Naturally, due to the excitement, I didn't at first catch the meaning; it was just a number. Then Appleseed's brother let forth with his whooping yell, and so I understood. The name of the winner spread quickly, and the awed, murmuring whispers were like a rainstorm.

Oh, Appleseed himself was a sorry sight. He was crying as though he was mortally wounded, but when Hamurabi lifted him on to his shoulders so the crowd could get a gander, he dried his eyes with the cuffs of his sweater and began grinning. Mr. R. C. Judkins yelled, 'Gyp! Lousy gyp!' but was drowned out by a deafening round of applause.

Middy grabbed my arm. 'My teeth,' she squealed. 'Now I'm gonna get my teeth.'

'Teeth?' said I, kind of dazed.

'The false kind,' says she. 'That's what we're gonna get us with the money—a lovely set of white false teeth.'

But at that moment my sole interest was in how Appleseed had known. 'Hey, tell me,' I said desperately, 'tell me, how in God's name did he know there was just exactly seventy-seven dollars and thirty-five cents?'

Middy gave me this *look*. 'Why, I thought he told you,' she said, real serious. 'He counted.'

'Yes, but how—how?'

'Gee, don't you even know how to count?'

'But is that all he did?'

'Well,' she said, following a thoughtful pause, 'he did do a little praying, too.' She started to dart off, then turned back and called, 'Besides, he was born with a caul on his head.'

And that's the nearest anybody ever came to solving the mystery.

Thereafter, if you were to ask Applesced 'How come?' he would smile strangely and change the subject. Many years later he and his family moved to somewhere in Florida and were never heard from again.

But in our town his legend flourishes still; and, till his death a year ago last April, Mr. Marshall was invited each Christmas Day to tell the story of Applesced to the Baptist Bible class. Hamurabi once typed up an account and mailed it around to various magazines. It was never printed. One editor wrote back and said that 'If the little girl really turned out to be a movie star, then there might be something to your story.' But that's not what happened, so why should you lie?

## Domestic Portraiture

BY P. N. FURBANK

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THE Rev. Legh Richmond, the hero of 'Domestic Portraiture,' was ordained in 1799. About this date the name Evangelical came to denote a distinct party within the Church of England; and, before discussing Richmond himself, it may be as well to note the relation of this party to the general revival of religion in the eighteenth century. Most of the essentials, of course, it shared with the larger movement. Its theology was that of Whitefield and Wesley. Its prime tenet was that Justification was by Faith alone, and that Sanctification must precede works. It showed among its members the same division between Arminianism and Calvinism as existed between the followers of those two leaders. It insisted, like them, on the paramount significance of conversion, and the inutility of all religious behaviour that did not tend towards or spring from this experience.

It shared with them a cast of behaviour and a vocabulary unlike the world's. The behaviour, which was partly a recollection of the Puritans', took its stand upon *earnestness*. (Wilde's play and Butler's *Ernest Pontifex* belong to the long and troubled history of this word.) 'A single remark of Wilberforce in reference to a specific occasion,' says Canon Abner Brown in his *Recollections*,<sup>1</sup> 'describes him at all times: "Simeon is in earnest."' Simeon, according to his biographer Carus, 'used to observe of Martyn's picture, whilst looking up at it with affectionate earnestness, as it hung over his fire-place: "There!—see that blessed man! What an expression of countenance! No one looks at me as he does—he never takes his eyes off me; and seems always to be saying, Be serious—Be in earnest—Don't trifle—don't trifle." Then smiling at the picture, and gently bowing, he added: "and I won't trifle—I won't trifle."' The habits which sometimes went with the earnestness were, according to a friendly critic,

'a solemn lifting up of the eyes, artificial impulses of breath, grotesque and regulated gestures and postures in religious exercises, an affected faltering of the voice, and . . . abrupt religious exclamations in common discourse . . .'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Canon Abner Brown: *Recollections of the Conversation Parties of the Rev. G. Simeon*.

<sup>2</sup> John Foster: *On the aversion of men of taste to the Evangelical religion*.



Most of these were certainly to be seen in Simeon, with his unexpected sighs : ' My leanness ! My leanness ! ' and his eye ' full of cheerful affection, his countenance slightly raised, so as not to seem fixed on any individual.'

As to the vocabulary, as Foster puts it, they made

' an attempt to create, out of the general mass of the language, a dialect which should be intrinsically spiritual, and so exclusively appropriated to Christian doctrine as to be totally unserviceable for any other subject.'

The movement is inseparable from this vocabulary—its ' vital ' and ' experimental ' religion, its ' seasons,' ' frames,' ' living views of Jesus Christ,' events which are ' sanctified ' to us, ' faithful,' ' painful ' and ' awakened ' ministers, ' godliness,' ' snares,' and works which are ' as filthy rags.' Some of the language is carried on from the Puritans, some is apparently novel. It has an air, often deceptive, of springing from the Authorised version. Foster divides it usefully into three categories : ' a peculiar mode of using various common words ' consisting ' partly in expressing ideas by such simple words as do not simply or directly belong to them, instead of other simple words which do simply and directly belong to them and in general language are used to express them . . . as for instance, *walk*, and *conversation* instead of *conduct*, *actions*, or *deportment* . . .' Secondly,

' a class of words peculiar in themselves, as being seldom used except by divines, but of which the meaning can with perfect ease be expressed, without definition or circumlocution, by other single terms which are in general use. For example, edification, tribulation, blessedness, godliness, righteousness, carnality, lusts (a term peculiar and theological only in the plural).'

Thirdly,

' words almost peculiar to the language of divines, and for which equivalent terms *cannot* be found, except in the form of definition or circumlocution, sanctification, grace, covenant, salvation, and a few more . . . These may be called, in a qualified sense, the technical terms of evangelical religion.'

I may add, that the peculiarities of the dialect lie not only in vocabulary, but also in grammar : consider, for instance, the use of prepositions in ' slept in Jesus,' ' partaker of the grace of God in truth,' ' Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.'

The evangelicals proper again resembled the parent body in busying themselves in schemes of philanthropy and in missions.

But philanthropy, at least, was the fashion of the age, and they were joined here not only by 'awakened' dissenters, but by the unawakened remainder of the Church, by fashionable society, and by sceptics and Utilitarians.

But most obviously of all, and by definition, they were at one with the greater movement in professing a *preaching* religion. The movement, as we know, sprang from the unexpected, and almost unbelievably violent, response produced in uneducated audiences by a new style of extempore preaching. Preaching then straight away had an enormous vogue, and began to elbow out of precedence the other parts of religion, the liturgy, the sacraments, the order of the Church. The Methodists had found the church too small for their following and had taken to the fields; the more orthodox lengthened their sermons, introduced a second sermon on Sunday, began week-day lectures, took to extempore preaching, and by this fatal gradation were sooner or later tempted to preach, like the Methodists, in unlicensed gatherings. Both Methodists and Churchmen began family prayers (an earlier tradition kept up only by the dissenters); and family prayers quickly turned into family sermons, or 'expositions.' From the doctrine of Justification by Faith, it followed that nothing in the way of literature or sacraments or church discipline ought to be allowed to compete with the business of inculcating 'the one thing needful'; and 'pious and active' ministers of the day were heard to say that 'The Lord's Prayer had no Gospel in it, and was scarcely suitable for Christian worship,' or to complain of the needlessness of reading so many Scripture lessons, 'for that the Bible was a book chiefly for private study.'<sup>1</sup>

'Serious' religion meant sermons, and still more sermons, and the lives of the first heroic generation of preachers were sacrificed to the need. 'If the time spent in travelling from place to place, and some brief intervals of repose and preparation be subtracted,' says Sir James Stephen,

'his [Whitefield's] whole life may be said to have been consumed in the delivery of one continuous or scarcely interrupted sermon . . . Preach he must; and when no audience could be brought together, he seized a pen and preached to himself.'<sup>2</sup>

In his working or busy week, William Grimshaw would preach upwards of twenty-four sermons. Newton would still preach when hardly capable of conversation, or able from blindness to see his text.—'I cannot stop. What! shall the old African blasphemer

<sup>1</sup> Canon Brown, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography.*

stop while he can speak?' The next generation of preachers were on the whole suaver in style, but quite as voluble. A Mr. Whitbread (no doubt the celebrated one) went to hear Legh Richmond at St. Paul's, Bedford, in the year 1807, accompanied by a friend,

'the church was remarkably crowded—the preacher animated, and the interest of the congregation strongly excited. The gentleman above alluded to at length observed: "He has now preached with incredible fluency, both as to matter and language, for three-quarters of an hour, and he does not seem even yet exhausted, or to be drawing to a close." "Exhausted!" replied Mr. Whitbread, "he can hold on in the same way, if necessary, for two or three hours longer."' <sup>1</sup>

By Richmond's time, pulpit eloquence had reached the height of vogue. It is not altogether easy to define the nature of this eloquence, since printed sermons must differ from extempore ones. One gathers that it must have been *easier* to be eloquent upon evangelical topics than on most others—the *matter* was chosen for you, and restricted to a very few points; the ingenuity was all to be spent in embellishment and illustration. Wilberforce, who heard Richmond at the Lock Chapel (a fashionable Evangelical pulpit), remarked 'voluble and pious, but rambling.' This may have been a common failing: Dean Milner once went up to Rowland Hill in the vestry after a sermon, and 'cordially shaking him by the hand, said, in the hearing of several persons, "Mr. Hall, Mr. Hill, it is this *slap-dash style* of preaching after all, that does all the good."' The 'incredible fluency' seems also to have been common. A critic said of Robert Hall, a famous Baptist preacher of the day, 'When he discusses a topic, his mind, like a vast machine, gradually acquires a velocity, which not only calls every power of his own soul into action, but has an irresistible influence upon more remote objects . . .' And the same image recurs in the remark of a friend of Hall's who had helped him, in a moment of hesitation, in preparing a sermon:

'He was pleased to say that the conversation had relieved him of much anxiety, though the stimulus it afforded could only be like that of a humble artist who occasionally brushes away a little dust, which for a moment had impeded the movement of some powerful machine.' <sup>2</sup>

The accounts we have of Coleridge's eloquence are very close to this; and he, as we know, preached in Unitarian chapels (where

<sup>1</sup> T. S. Grimshaw: *Memoir of the Rev. Legh Richmond*.

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Morris: *Biographical Recollections of Robert Hall*.

Hazlitt first heard him). The irresistible fluency of his talk, which gave it both its charm and its terror, was no doubt partly contracted from evangelical models.

So far, then, the evangelicals within the Church had no quarrel with those who had left it. But on the issue of discipline, over which there had been much forbearance hitherto, they suddenly and finally parted. It would take too long to discuss the causes for this. No doubt the French Revolution precipitated it. The perennial suspicion of the orthodox that irregular conventicles might turn into irregular political assemblies had not greatly troubled evangelical churchmen before this event; but in the panic that followed it they were all too eager to conceal their previous indiscretions. (Even in the twentieth century, Henry Venn's descendant and biographer thought it wise to disguise the extent of his ancestor's irregular preaching.) Whatever the causes, the effect of the split was to give the church group a more specifically middle-class character, together with certain other new and distinguishing traits: it talked less of Hell, and more of the Family.

Puritanism, the religion of the State; Wesleyanism, the religion of the heart; the Evangelical Movement, the religion of the home: so Archdeacon Cunningham once distinguished them.<sup>1</sup> The home meant the point of resistance against jacobinism, socinianism, and all other infections from revolutionary France. The whole moral and religious outlook of the evangelicals took from now on a twist towards the problems of the family; there was spreading of skirts, a protective expansion of wings. The features of the movement which otherwise recalled the Puritans—the veto on public entertainments, the strict observance of the sabbath, a general horror of the 'profane'—took a distinguishing note from being levelled at the family. The writings of evangelicals came more and more to be concerned with, or written for, the Christian Home. The literature of family entertainment was still to be written; but in the meanwhile Bowdler adjusted Shakespeare and Gibbon to family needs.<sup>2</sup> He felt, in fact, more genuine sympathy with Shakespeare than many of his fellow evangelicals. Richard Cecil says of Shakespeare, 'he had a low and licentious taste. . . . A man, whose heart and taste are modelled on the Bible, nauseates him in the mass, while he is enraptured and astonished by the flashes of his pre-eminent genius.'

This very hasty sketch may serve to place the Rev. Legh

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Charles Smyth: *Simeon and Church Order*.

<sup>2</sup> Another of Bowdler's enterprises, by the way, was the quest for a health-resort elsewhere than in France, whose watering-places might be expected to do as much harm to souls as good to bodies. He concluded in favour of Malta.

Richmond, the real occasion of this essay. He was a celebrated preacher, in the great age of evangelical eloquence ; and he made an experiment in the upbringing of a family, when the Family was acutely upon evangelical minds. The Rev. Grimshawe's life of Richmond was almost enough to extinguish interest in him once and for all ; but in 1833 there appeared a further account of him, entitled '*Domestic Portraiture, or the Successful Application of Religious Principle in the Education of a Family, Exemplified in the Memoirs of Three of the Deceased Children of the Rev. Legh Richmond.*' The book appeared anonymously, the author being his friend, the Rev. T. Fry. It is a curious document.

Legh Richmond is best known as the author of *The Dairyman's Daughter*. Tears and conversion followed the reading of this tract in St. Petersburg and Ceylon. He was a leading member of the Bible Society, the Tract Society and the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. He edited *The Fathers of the Church* (a selection from the writings of the Reformers) by which he nearly made himself bankrupt. As a preacher he was hardly less celebrated than Newton and Simeon themselves. His success and his fame were great ; much of his time was spent on preaching tours for the Jewish and Church Missionary Societies ; he feared privately that his success meant too much to him. His life, as related by Grimshawe, was composed of little else save preaching, and the preparation for it. Now, we know all we need as to the effects of this new style of preaching on those who heard it. But what of its effects upon the preacher ?

Extempore preaching, not requiring direct rehearsal, requires practice. And this practice is not to be confined to the library and the parson's Black Saturday ; it will occupy every day of the week and every circumstance of the day. And so it was with Legh Richmond.

'Mr. Richmond had the habit of connecting everything with God. Every event, pleasurable or painful ; every object in nature, or work of human ingenuity, suggested a subject for devout contemplation, and filled his soul with holy affections.'<sup>1</sup>

This was true enough. But it was also true that every event, every object in nature or work of human ingenuity suggested to him a subject for a sermon. In the first place, they had to be made to ; and by degrees, they could not be prevented from doing so. This was, of course, a result that an evangelical minister must have desired. The art of *improving* everyday occurrences was invaluable

<sup>1</sup> Grimshawe.



to him. Only if he could not 'so feel and think as to bend all subjects naturally and gracefully to Christ,' says Richard Cecil, must he 'seek his remedy in selecting such as are more evangelical.' To an experienced divine the habit became second-nature. Mr. Fletcher, of Madely, once took Simeon round his parish. In the course of their walk,

'he came to a smith's shop . . . and could not forbear entering it. And here it is astonishing how he spoke to the several persons who were labouring in it. To one of them, who was hammering upon the anvil, "Oh," says he, "pray to God that he may hammer that hard heart of yours." To another, that was heating the iron, "Ah, thus it is that God tries his people in the furnace of affliction." And so he went round, giving to every one a portion suitable to the business in which he was engaged. To another, when a furnace was drawing, "See, Thomas, if you can make such a furnace as that, think what a furnace God can make for ungodly souls."'<sup>1</sup>

Richmond so cultivated this skill as to contract something like a disease, a *cacoethes praedicandi*. He found God at the heart of phenomena, but under a new aspect, that of God-the-sermon.

He had a fine taste for scenery, and of course his method of allegorising it was not peculiar to his school. All that is new is the intensification of the habit.

'What peaceful harmony subsists throughout all this lovely landscape [he writes, in *The Young Cottager*]. These majestic cliffs, some clothed with trees and shrubs; others bare and unadorned with herbage, yet variegated with many-coloured earths; these are not only sublime and delightful to behold, but they are answering the end of their creation, and serve as a barrier to stop the progress of the waves.'

'But how little peace and harmony can I comparatively see in my own heart! The landscape *within* is marred by dreary barren wilds . . .'

and

'I wish I were like this little stream of water. It takes its first rise scarcely a mile off, yet it has done good even in that short course . . .'

May my course be like unto thine, thou little rivulet . . .'

His letters from the scenes of his preaching tours are in the same vein.

'Loving landscape scenery as I do, my grand object is to see God in it; to trace him in every part of his works; to acknowledge

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir*: ed. Wm. Carus.

his goodness in them, and to collect arguments from them to endear the character of Christ.' <sup>1</sup>

Hannah More recommends something similar :

'Teach, as He taught, by seizing on surrounding objects, passing events, local circumstances, peculiar characters, apt allusions, just analogy, appropriate illustration. Call in all creation, animate and inanimate, to your aid, and accustom your young audience to

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.' <sup>2</sup>

He would like his daughters to cultivate their taste for drawing : 'Pencils, paint, India ink, and India rubber, may be devoted to the honour of Him who bestows the power of combining their respective properties, so as to produce similitudes of his works.' <sup>3</sup>

It is more novel in him, that he should take the same lessons from 'works of human ingenuity.' He responds violently to these. Of the 'Automaton Chess Player' which he sees in London, he writes : 'It had so singular an effect on my nerves, that I wished for permission to give one immense laugh, and another immense cry, in order to give vent to my exuberant spirits.' <sup>4</sup> He is enraptured with the kaleidoscope, and writes a Meditation upon this 'useful and elegant instrument' for the use of his daughter :

'I took up my kaleidoscope, and as I viewed with delight the extraordinary succession of beautiful images which it presented to my sight, I was struck,

1. With the singular phenomenon of perfect order being invariably, and constantly produced out of perfect disorder—so that, as by magical influence, confusion and irregularity seemed to become the prolific parents of symmetry and beauty.
2. It occurred to me that the universality of its adoption would imperceptibly lead to the cultivation of the principles of taste, elegance, and beauty through the whole of the present and following generations ; and that from the philosopher and artist down to the poorest child in the community.

3. . . .

(the list goes on to number 9).

<sup>1</sup> *Domestic Portraiture.*

<sup>2</sup> *Strictures on the Modern System of female education.*

<sup>3</sup> *D.P.*

<sup>4</sup> *D.P.*

'I laid my kaleidoscope down, and thought of the adorable attributes of Him, from whom all blessings, earthly and heavenly, flow.

I took up my kaleidoscope again, and was led in the contemplation of its use and beauties, to think,

1. Here I seem to see, on the one hand, the ruin and disorder of human nature . . .<sup>1</sup>

It was not only the marvels of nature and science that Richmond turned to profit. He found ways by which all domestic life could be allegorised ; and he made these into a system. It is this system that occupies much of *Domestic Portraiture*. Another celebrated preacher, Richard Cecil, felt the same need :

'You are accountable [he says] for your wife's conduct, dress, and manners, as well as those of your children, whose education must be peculiarly exemplary. Your family is to be a picture of what you wish other families to be ; and without the most determined resolution, in reliance on God, to finish this picture, cost what it will, your recommending family religion to others will but create a smile.'<sup>2</sup>

Richmond made himself, as far as possible, into a palpable sermon. His family was often heard to say, 'We love religion, because we see papa so lovely and happy under its influence !' His aim, in the plan of education which *Domestic Portraiture* describes, was above all good *example*, in the sermon sense. The title of the book was originally conceived by Richmond himself, who had meant it for an account of the conversion and death of his son Wilberforce. This account he could never bring himself to write. It would, however, have been another *Dairyman's Daughter* ; its object would have been all exemplary. And the system of education of which his son was the fruit had just this object.

The reader may have seen Richmond's name on the title page of William Wilberforce's *Practical View of Christianity*, where the following quotation is often found : 'To the unsought and unexpected introduction of Mr. Wilberforce's book on "Practical Christianity," I owe, through God's mercy, the first sacred impression which I ever received.'<sup>3</sup>

Richmond's religion closely followed Wilberforce's pattern ; and it should be recalled that Wilberforce's book has an important section entitled 'On the admission of the passions into religion.' There is perhaps something suggestive here. In following his home-life, one is often reminded that Richmond was a man of

<sup>1</sup> D.P.

<sup>2</sup> *Negative Rules given to a Young Minister.*

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs of the Rev. Leigh Richmond.*

morbidly acute sensibilities, and one whose passion constantly took a religious form. One again recalls Richard Cecil, who confessed

'I have a strong dash of melancholy. It is a high and exquisite feeling. When I first wake in the morning, I could often weep with pleasure.'

'Indeed,' says his wife, 'his feelings were too acute for his comfort, and his views of rectitude were so high, that they opened perpetual avenues to pain.' I think, too, there may have been a further professional cause for the high-pitched and vulnerable temperaments of such men. Those who preach extempore, with all the precautions they may take, live in constant danger of disaster. They are certain, at some time or another, to have found themselves at a loss for words, and the recollection will always afterwards haunt them. The language of evangelical ministers is always deeply superstitious on this subject; their diaries, Richmond's among them, record day by day their frame of mind, propitious or otherwise, upon entering the pulpit. A poor 'season,' one without 'unction,' might be the fault, or rather the misfortune, of the whole congregation; but, on the other hand, it might be the fault of the preacher individually, perhaps a punishment for too elated a frame of mind, or too much confidence in his own as opposed to God's power. 'Woe be to me if I were to be saved by my frames,' says Simeon: 'nevertheless, I would never willingly be in a bad one.'<sup>1</sup> The matter of responsibility for success or failure repeated in little the central difficulty of evangelical religion. Just as, upon evangelical theory, goodness was the perquisite of God alone, so that men could have no credit for their own good works, these having significance merely as proofs of a state of grace; so, whilst a bad sermon might be a *punishment* to a preacher, a good one was not to his credit, but only to God's. There is a nice instance of the belief in an anecdote of Simeon. 'Did you hear that sermon?' he asked a visitor to his church. 'Sad, sad! Poor, poor! You should have heard me preach from that text at L——. Oh! it was grand.'—'Those who knew Mr. Simeon intimately,' says Canon Brown, 'would at once comprehend his meaning to be that on the one occasion he had preached under a load of spiritual deadness and weakness; but on the other, with the comforting sense of God's presence, and blessing, and sustaining strength.' But only to the tough, like Simeon, or to the perfectly humble, did the belief present as little difficulty. To the self-doubting minister, the need to hope for the divine afflatus to

<sup>1</sup> Diary, 1796.

descend, must have been peculiarly agitating ; as he had no right or power to do anything directly to assist it, his only recourse was in the anxious study of his own 'frames' or states of mind. I may add, that it may well have been here that evangelicals got their excessive sensitivity to omens. The workings of Providence took for them something like an animistic character. To read Newton's autobiography is to feel that nothing could have been more plainly insane than to have stayed in a boat or continued upon a journey from which he had withdrawn. 'I am emphatically a pupil of signs,' says Cecil, '—waiting for and following the leadings and openings of Divine Providence in my affairs.'—'Providence,' he writes elsewhere, 'is a greater mystery than religion.'

Time increased rather than lessened the violence of Richmond's emotions. When towards the end of his life, his son Henry was on the point of leaving home for Cambridge, 'the necessity of his removal to the university haunted him like a spectre. He passed many anxious days and sleepless nights in anticipation of the event ; and at times seemed to be in the deepest trouble ; he talked and wrote continually about the possible consequences of it. The subject seemed to absorb and depress his spirits.' On this, Fry remarks :

'Mr. Richmond . . . was standing on the verge of eternity ; his health and spirits had been greatly shattered by the severe family trials through which he had lately been made to pass ; and his feelings on all subjects connected with religion were wrought up to a pitch of acuteness, which rendered unnecessary contact with the world almost insupportable.'

This was only an exaggeration of a state that had long been normal to him. It was an essential part of his system of education that his children should have no companions outside their own family.

'So inflexibly did he adhere to his rule, that he allowed no intercourse whatever with other families, except under his own watchful eye and diligent superintendence.'<sup>1</sup>

'It is possible,' says Fry, 'his feelings were morbidly acute on occasions, and his extreme anxiety for the spiritual welfare of his family often proved injurious to himself, for he sometimes passed a sleepless night in expectation of an ordinary visit on the morrow. Such was his vigilance that if a friend introduced his son under circumstances of common courtesy, he appeared restless and uneasy if the young people were left together without superintendence for a few moments.'

<sup>1</sup> D.P.



Cecil's biographer makes much the same remark of him :

'Mr. C. may have been censured for not letting his children mix more with society ; but he used to say " Purity of character is to be preferred to accomplishment ; " and he was aware of snares and traps into which young minds might fall. If, however, mixed society was any loss, that loss was amply compensated by HIS OWN, which was always interesting and enriching.'

Richmond, like Cecil, undertook to supply in his own person the place of outside acquaintances ; and endeavoured

'by a succession and variety of recreations to employ the leisure hours to advantage. He had recourse to what was beautiful in nature or ingenious in art or science ; and when abroad he collected materials to gratify curiosity. He fitted up his museum, his auctarium, and his library with specimens of mineralogy, instruments for experimental philosophy, and interesting curiosities from every part of the world. . . .'

Their amusements were principally scientific. 'The connection of science with religion was a favourite topic, on which he used to enlarge with great satisfaction.' He expounded the solar system in verse :

. . . Next, revolving amidst this bright region of stars,  
We behold in his orbit the ruddy-faced Mars,  
He appears to move on without lunar assistance,  
At a hundred and forty-four millions of distance. . . .

They had the use of a magic-lantern 'to exhibit phantasmagoria and teach natural history,' various microscopes, a telescope, and air-pump, and 'other machines for illustrating and explaining the principles of pneumatics and electricity.' On their birthdays, he wrote them a letter of congratulation, usually accompanied by a present of some useful kind. 'The day was spent in innocent festivity, and the evening was employed in the museum, where he gave a lecture on experimental philosophy.'

Their religion was directed by means of what he calls his 'Home Mission' ; the plan reveals much of his character.

'Mr. R. provided each child with a separate sleeping-room, thus securing a comfortable place of retirement and devotion. These little sanctuaries were always accessible to himself ; he often visited them to leave a note on the table . . . and to these notes he requested a reply.'

'I have heard him explain the reasons for so singular a method of

instructions,' says Fry; 'he used to say, "I feel an unsurmountable backwardness to close personal conversation with my children, when I begin, they are silent, and it is not long before I also feel tongue-tied; yet I cannot be easy without ascertaining the effect of my instructions, and hence I have been driven to use my pen, because I could not open my lips."'

Discipline in the family was kept by moral means; Legh Richmond disapproves of corporal punishment.

'Mr. Richmond's method of discipline was peculiar to himself, partly the effect of his own unbounded tenderness and affection, but, in a great measure, of his deep and extraordinary piety . . . the chief way in which he marked his displeasure, was by those signs of extreme distress, which penetrated the heart of the delinquent and softened rebellion into regret. From the misconduct of his child, he seemed to reflect on himself, as the author of a corrupt being. He humbled himself before God, and in prayer sought help from above, while he kept the offender at a distance, or separated him from the society of his family, as one unworthy to share in their privileges and affections.'<sup>1</sup>

'No one of his children,' says Fry, 'could long endure this exclusion, or bear with sullen indifference, a countenance which silently expressed the deepest anguish.'

Richmond's system was not perfected until his hopes for his family had suffered a blow; some of its details were prompted by this disaster. His eldest son Nugent went astray. As a child, he had been educated at home, 'being seldom absent from his father's eye: companions he had none, for Mr. R. was afraid of bringing his son into contact with any associations out of his own family.'

'It may be doubted,' says Fry, 'how far it was wise to confine a boy to his own resources for amusement; for at this time Mr. R. had not provided the philosophical apparatus, by which he afterwards supplied his children with full employment in their leisure hours.' On being sent away to school he fell in with disreputable company, and had to be packed off to sea. On reaching India he left his ship, against the will of the captain, his father's friend. For a moment one thinks he is going to make good his escape. But 'rebellion softens into regret.' He is soon writing pleadingly to his parents. He informs his father of the good effect of the *Dairy-*

<sup>1</sup> There is a warrant for this method of moral blackmail in Locke (vide a frightening example of its application in the continuation of Richardson's *Pamela*), but without the admixture of religion.

*man's Daughter* in Ceylon. He joins another ship, and tells how he tries to stamp out vice among its crew.

'I went among them this evening, and found them at hazard : I threw the dice overboard, though probably my life is in danger for what I have done, for the dice belonged to a Spaniard, who thinks nothing of his stiletto . . .'

He sets off for the Mauritius and is shipwrecked, losing everything save 'one trunk, in which was my Bible and the *Dairyman's Daughter*.' His health is much weakened. He gets news of the death of a Miss — whom he had hoped to marry. He sets sail for England, has a relapse of fever, and is found dead in his cabin. Out of his scanty property (it is the final act of submission) he leaves £50 to the Bible Society, £50 to the Church Missionary Society, £50 to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and £50 to the Religious Tract Society.

Wilberforce, the second son, has to compensate for Nugent's error. It is a pathetic story, too. He is consumptive, like the *Dairyman's Daughter* and Little Jane, and dies at the age of eighteen, after a protracted decline. 'What a field for usefulness and affectionate attention on the part of ministers and Christian friends,' says his father, 'is opened by the frequent attacks and lingering process of *consumptive* illness.' He seems destined from the start to provide texts and examples. 'Many a rose has sprung up around the cold grave of dear Willy,' writes Richmond to his daughter Katharine,

'and they still blossom, and I trust will continue to blossom, till they be transplanted from the spiritual garden of Turvey to the paradise of God. But can I be otherwise than anxious that my dear K— should add a flower to my domestic and parochial shrubbery.'<sup>1</sup>

He is lame from a childhood accident, and so makes the museum and auctarium his chief amusements. He is his father's favourite child ; and Richmond's letters to him can, on occasion, be charming :

'As I was journeying near York last Saturday, where should I suddenly find myself but in a little village called *Wilberforce*, as my driver, and the way-post informed me. "Dear me," said I to my fellow-traveller, "how a certain little lad of my acquaintance, would be surprised and pleased, had he been in the chaise this moment." So I got up and walked up and down in Wilberforce, thinking and talking about that said little lad. It is a pretty little

<sup>1</sup> Grimshawe tones down and spoils this letter in the version in the *Memoir*.

place. As I loved the name, both for your sake, and for the sake of Henrietta's godfather ; I amused myself with asking different people the name of the place, and everybody's answer was the same . . . one of them said, "I canna think wots the matter wi' the mon ; he made us all say the same thing. Mayhop the mon's a foo." Now all that was the matter with me, was that I loved you, and it quite pleased me to hear your name when I so little expected it.'

He worried for some time about Willy's religious state. Though the latter had early on decided to enter the ministry, his father could never persuade him to talk of his spiritual convictions ; and on the appearance of consumptive symptoms, the father's worry grew intense. They go on appalling holidays, in the interests of Willy's health—the father tormented with the desire to question him, the son depressed and silent. At other times, the father writes to him pleadingly, but in vain. Willy's symptoms grow graver, and he cannot leave the house. At last, thrown now without escape upon his father's company, and the latter's anxiety growing desperate, he gives in and talks of his own soul. The father is overwhelmed with relief. A death-bed dialogue ensues, which lasts many months. Every turn of Willy's hopes and fears is discussed and turned to profit. It is the *Dairyman's Daughter* over again, more poignant and more protracted. Willy catches his father's habit of allegorising : it grows clear how close this is to a compulsive consulting of omens. So we watch them in a final pathetic competition in this game of example-taking.

'Soon afterwards, while the servant was removing the breakfast things, I was stirring the fire, as he complained of the cold ; and a short silence ensued. He said presently, with a playful smile, "I was thinking while you stirred the fire, how much easier it is to rake the ashes from the grate than to get rid of sin from the heart ;" and then relapsing into a grave look, he added, "how often the ashes of sin deaden the flame of religion in the heart."'

And later :

'He gradually awoke, and I observed him to fix his eyes on a globe of water which stood near the window, and contained a gold fish. I inquired what he was looking at so earnestly. He replied, "I have often watched the mechanical motion of our gold and silver fish in that globe. There is now only one left, and that seems to be weak and sickly. I wonder which of us will live the longest—the fish or I ?" He paused, and then added, "That fish, my dear papa, is supported by the waters in the vessel, but I hope I am supported by the waters of salvation. The fish will soon die and live no

more ; but if I am upheld by the water of salvation, I shall live for ever."

"His remark led me to make some observations on the practical use which may be made of natural objects, and the advantages of cultivating a habit of seeing something of God and the soul everywhere, and of accustoming the mind to seek such comparisons and allusions as tend to improve and delight it . . .

"At this moment a gleam of light from the setting sun shone upon the gold fish, and produced a brilliant reflection from its scales, as it swam in the glass vessel. "Look," said he, "at its beauty now."—"So, my dear boy, may a bright and more glorious sun shine upon you, and gild the evening of your days."—"I hope," he replied, "although I sometimes feel a cloud and a doubt pass across my mind, that in the evening-time there shall be light, and then in his light I shall see light."



## Lost Day

BY NOEL BLAKISTON

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SIR ALISON WHITEHEAD stood in front of the crackling log-fire in his study, filling his pipe. He was dressed in an old tweed knickerbocker suit, the kind of suit a man cannot be persuaded to discard though he is told that it will soon be too shabby even to be sent to the jumble sale. On his feet he wore bedroom slippers. He had just had breakfast. Lighting his pipe, he looked round his bookshelves and out at the falling snow. My word, I'm happy, he said to himself and pulled his knickerbockers in front so that the hot tweed embraced the backs of his legs.

The day stretched ahead of him in uneventful bliss. It was in the uneventfulness that the bliss still mainly consisted. No one would try to get at him. No one would ask his opinion. He would not have to make any decisions. He would not have to give his mind to any matter unwillingly. Memoranda would not appear on his desk demanding his urgent attention. His attention could be given to just what he chose. Beyond certain well-regulated domestic duties he had not an obligation in the world. This happy state of affairs, which had now lasted a fortnight, was still too good to be true.

Many of his colleagues, he had noticed, when the moment of retiring approached, began to take fright. That leisure to which they had professed to look forward so eagerly, became, when imminent, less attractive to them. They hung on past the moment when they might have retired. They hung on as long as they could. Not so, Sir Alison. Leisure had no terrors for him. It had indeed been his dream for forty years, a dream that became only more delightful as the prospect of its realisation came nearer. But, unlike the others, he had never spoken of his secret aspiration. He had never let the cat out of the bag. All were astonished therefore when, as soon as he was pensionable, punctually at sixty, he made off, shaking himself free from all entanglements. Not a committee, not a board meeting, not an inaugural address, should call him back. It was incredible. Everyone could have sworn that Whitehead would die in harness, Whitehead the conscientious, the dutiful, the indefatigable, the impeccable, the firm, the wise, the good—in a word, the indispensable. How would affairs be carried on without him? 'Give the younger men a chance!' he

said. 'But I look on you as one of the younger men,' said the Minister.

The compliment was not a hollow one, for as he stood warming his back at the fire Sir Alison did indeed feel young. His physical mechanism was in perfect order. He slept excellently. His appetite was splendid. He had just eaten a schoolboy's breakfast, and would presently pay a happy visit to the lavatory. His mind, meanwhile, was as alert and inquisitive as a boy's. What fun he was going to have, taking up his education again where he had left it, all those years ago, at Oxford. There they were on the shelves, the leisurely masterpieces, waiting for him, the *Aeneid*, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, *Jerusalem Liberata*, *Arabia Deserta*, Erasmus' *Letters*. What fun it would be! With luck he still had a quarter of his life ahead of him.

He walked over to the window and gazed out at the snow. Happy sight! The fall was so thick that he could not even see the pergola at the near end of the lawn. His new house, lonely at any time, seemed more than ever remote as it was thus severed even from its own garden. Which, in Sir Alison's opinion, was all to the good. The fluttering cascade that was so effectually and so silently laying its thick blanket on house and garden and stables, and on the downs enclosing them, ensured his isolation, made his new freedom even more impregnable. That awful London! Heavens, he was glad to be away from the place! The devilish traffic, the crowds, the harassed faces, the lewd advertisements, the imbecile wicked newspapers, the unlovable buildings, the unwelcoming streets—he would be happy never to see them again!

The falling snow had hushed all sounds from without. He listened, and could hear only distant household noises. The sound of the raking out of the furnace echoed along the hot pipes to the study, with its comforting message of warmth and of smooth organisation below stairs. (God bless darling Helen!) Then there was the far-off sound of Rosie at the piano. Then, also far off, the telephone went—a tradesman, no doubt, ringing up from the village to say that the snow was too thick on the road for him to deliver his things. Good, good, good. Sir Alison was enjoying the slowing down of his life enormously.

He looked around his library. Up to now he had been spending a large part of the days unpacking his books and arranging them on the shelves. Everything was now in place. He could begin to read. What should he start with? Taking down the first volume of Gibbon he settled himself in an armchair in front of the fire, put his feet on the chimney-piece and opened the book.

His eye rested on the bookplate, designed by his father, the dean, some fifty years ago. It represented a cathedral seen through an open window, the very view that his father enjoyed when he looked up from his writing-table at the deanery. Beneath, on a scroll, was the Whitehead motto, *Double not*. What an inappropriate motto, reflected Sir Alison, if you heard it as the battle-cry of a bruising extrovert. Yet how suitable if it was the whispered warning of a friend. 'This, you Whiteheads, this is your weak point! You think too much! If you will only believe enough in what you are doing, you will have no difficulty in getting to the top of the tree.' Alison Whitehead had heeded the warning. Life is long. It has to be lived. With that moral decisiveness which all who knew him learned to respect, he put away, at an early age, the fascinating, undermining thoughts.

He had had a full life. He had met all sorts and conditions of men. His work, and his holidays, had taken him to many parts of the world. He had fought in a war. He had experienced the ups and downs of passionate romantic love, for better and for worse, in sickness and in health. He had had four children, only the youngest of whom, Rosie, was still at home. His elder daughter and his elder son had already made him three times a grandfather. Various people, of whom he was very fond indeed, had died. On the whole he had had his share of the joys and sorrows of life.

And what had they taught him? Certain rules. If he had his life over again, he might in certain of the circumstances behave in rather a different way. But—and with a delightful feeling of relaxation he permitted the family motto, in his case, to have spent itself—what had he learned of a general or philosophic nature about existence? What is the purpose of it all? What, if anything, happens to you when you die? Life did not seem at all long to him when such absorbing inquiries were allowed to make themselves heard. Confoundedly short, in fact.

Once these questions were admitted nothing else seemed worth a thought. The problems of existence were immeasurably more important than those of life. As to their answers, he felt that he knew no more than when he was a boy reading Greats. The process of living told you nothing about what happened on the other side of the great wall of death. It was rather at the subdued moments, at the moments when life was least lively, that you seemed nearest to penetrating the mystery. At such a moment as the present, for instance, when the midwinter hush lay on everything outside, and the fire had momentarily ceased crackling, and his mind was empty and his heart lay open to any manifestation . . .

'No, sir, Sir Alison is no longer in conference. He is free now. He is expecting you, sir.' But it was always the same. As you approached the looking-glass to pass through, you merely knocked your face into its own familiar image. Perhaps, he said to himself, I am quite on the wrong lines.

There was a discreet affectionate tap on the door.

'Come in.'

Lady Whitehead was still a very pretty woman. She came over to his chair and sat on the arm.

'Are you having a nice time?'

'Mm. Wonderful.'

'What are you reading?'

'Gibbon. As a matter of fact I hadn't got further than the bookplate. What did you want, my precious?'

'A Father Donnelly telephoned for you just now.'

'Father Donnelly? I don't know any Fathers!'

'He was ringing up, he said, on behalf of Terence Pullen, who is very ill indeed and wants to see you. He is probably dying.'

'Terry Pullen dying!'

'I thought you wouldn't want to talk to the man, so I said you were out, but I took the address and telephone number. Was that right?'

'Absolutely, my dear. Ah, Sussex Avenue—that's his brother's.'

Terry Pullen dying! Sir Alison got up, went to the window and stood looking out at the snow. His memory was taken back four decades, to a summer day in the French Alps. The chaletful of undergraduates had divided itself into two parties which were to climb a mountain from different sides. The don had come in the same party as Alison. He was getting middle-aged and stopped from time to time to take breath. At length Alison broke away from the party and hurried on by himself. As he came up on to the grassy table at the top of the mountain the Honourable Terence Pullen appeared from the other side.

'Terry!'

'Alis!'

'Surely this, sir, is a mountain?'

'Nay, sir, 'tis but a considerable protuberance.'

Dr. Johnson, at the moment, was all the rage among the intelligentsia.

'Old Trigger goes so slowly, I've left my lot far behind,' said Alison.

'Mine were talking about God,' said Terence. 'Look at them!'  
Far below his party could be seen toiling up a rocky path.

'I say, it's pretty wonderful up here!'

They gazed around in exhilaration.

'Have a swig?'

Terence took a flask of brandy out of the hip-pocket of his shorts. A pronounced taste for liquor had already shown itself in the young man.

'I don't mind if I do,' said Alison.

They each had a fiery gulp.

'Sir, there must be only one pleasure greater than that of being at the top of a mountain.'

'What is that, sir?'

'Drinking brandy at the top of a mountain.'

'But have you ever been at the top of a mountain, sir?'

'I was once up Boxhill. Vertiginous, sir, vertiginous!'

They roared with laughter. Terence put his arm in Alison's.

'I say, Alis, I've got an idea. I'd been meaning to ask you. What do you say to our sharing a flat when we live in London? Wouldn't it be rather fun?'

Alison was surprised and not a little flattered.

'Why, of course, Terry! It would be grand!'

'You really mean it? How splendid! Let's have another pull for luck!'

\* \* \*

Sir Alison turned away from the window. Oh Lord, a London shirt, a London suit, a train, streets—the day lost! Why couldn't they leave him in peace?

'I could take the eleven-twenty,' he said.

'You're not thinking of going are you, today?'

'Yes.'

'But—it's madness!'

'Well—'

'You don't even like him at all, do you? I thought you hated him?'

'Well—I think I ought to go.'

Helen Whitehead knew that when her husband said 'I think I ought,' there was no arguing.

'I could probably catch the four-twenty back from Paddington. I'll be home for dinner.'

'In that case we'll have the duck this evening. I suppose you'll be having your lunch on the train? There's a restaurant car on that train from Swindon.'

'Yes. I wonder whether Rosie will drive me to the station? We ought to allow at least half an hour on a day like this.'



'Of course she will. I'll go and tell her. But I think you're quite mad, you know.'

She went to find Rosie and he went upstairs to change his clothes. Rosie, in the middle of her Chopin, received the news that she was to drive her father to the station with annoyance. These hysterical adults. Always on the move! Why can't they leave one in peace? In the car, as they ploughed their slow way through the snow, she said:

'Who is this dying man?'

'He's called Terence Pullen.'

'Do you like him very much?'

'Er—no.'

'You hate him?'

'No, not exactly.'

'In fact, you're completely indifferent to him?'

'Well—perhaps.'

'Yet you choose a day like today to go up to London to see him, because you think you ought to! You know, papa, there are days when I think you're quite bats!'

'Yes, my dear.'

'You're always doing things you don't want to do! You're the slave of duty!'

'Yes, my dear.'

'You're always telling me to sit up straight. You and your generation have wasted your lives sitting up straight.'

'There is much in what you say, my love.'

'It's time you began to learn to sit down crooked, see?'

'I had hoped I was just about to start to learn.'

After half an hour on the branch line and twenty minutes' wait on Swindon station, he found a seat in the London train. Though he had the *Oxford Book of Latin Verse* on his knee, his thoughts wandered away from it and he looked out at the falling snow. Presently he went along to the restaurant car, where he remained till the end of the journey. There is the duck for dinner he reminded himself as he paid the bill. The snow was falling less thickly when they approached the suburbs. In London it had turned to rain. The streets were dirty with melting slush. Sir Alison took a taxi from Paddington.

As the butler let him in, Lord Westbrook happened to be in the hall. Sir Alison had not set eyes on Terence's elder brother for many years. He was a distinguished figure, what Terence might have, ought to have, looked like. They shook hands. 'It's awfully good of you to come,' said Lord Westbrook. 'Terry seems

to want to see you very much about something or other. Should we go up? You're going to find him very much changed, you know.'

This was true. The face which Sir Alison saw on the pillow was hardly recognisable. The bloated cheeks had shrunk away in loose folds, the nose, no longer bulbous, already had a sharp appearance. But what Sir Alison noticed more than anything was the new look in the eyes. The dying man was frightened; which, to do him justice, Sir Alison had never known him to be in life. Lord Westbrook left them together.

The man in the bed, normally so large, looked so diminished and so low, Sir Alison by an odd impulse knelt down beside him.

'Alis!' The voice was weak.

'Terry!'

'It's awfully decent of you to come. I'm dying, Alis.'

'Oh no, you aren't. You look as if you'd last a long time yet.'

'No, no. I know I'm dying. Alis—Alis—'

'Yes, Terry. What is it?'

'Will you forgive me?'

'Forgive you? What for?'

'You know.'

'Why, Terry, I have nothing to forgive you for.'

Terry looked disappointed.

'Yes, you have,' he said miserably.

At this moment Sir Alison became aware that he was not alone in the room with the dying man. There was another kneeling figure on the other side of the bed.

'All right, Terry,' he said kindly. 'I'll say I forgive you, if that's what you want.'

A look of relief came into the anxious face.

'You forgive me?'

'Of course, Terry. With all my heart.'

'Thank you. Thank God.' He sighed. 'Now I can sleep a bit.'

He shut his eyes. There was now no sound in the room but the whisperings of the praying figure on the other side of the bed. Sir Alison, still on his knees, fell to wondering when he himself had last been in this unusual posture. For it had been his practice for many years, on the occasions on which he found himself in a church, to make a decent forward inclination rather than kneel completely. There was some particular occasion, not so very long ago, that he was trying to remember. Why, of course! 'Rise, Sir Alison!'

Terence seemed to be fast asleep now. Sir Alison rose. He had no wish to prolong the scene. He was uncomfortable. This was not his world at all. He wanted only to get away. Father Donnelly also got up from his knees and came with him to the bedroom door.

'Thank you so much for coming,' he said in a pretty Irish voice. 'It has meant so much to him. He wanted so desperately to see you, only you. I say, I had the devil of a time tracking your telephone number!'

There were a great many people out on the landing and on the stairs. Sir Alison had the impression of a gathering of the clans. He shook several hands, and was asked many times to stay and have a cup of tea. But he pressed his way to the front door and out into the street, where he took to his heels. Thank God that's over, he said to himself. He was unlucky in finding a taxi and reached the station on foot, rather wet. Still, he found an empty corner seat and settled himself with satisfaction in the train which was going, this time, in the right direction. Thank God that's over, he said again to himself.

But something told him that that was not over. He was aware of certain itching interrogations at the back of his mind, certain doubts. Now if there was one thing about which Sir Alison had always been particularly firm with himself, that was tidiness of the spirit. He strongly disapproved of a moral litter. He set himself to clear things up as quick as he could. At the moment he was aware that if he raised his eyes they would alight on objects that needed clearing up. Therefore he kept his eyes on his book, as the train moved out of London and the dirty afternoon became hidden in darkness.

He did his best to concentrate on the page. Then he read :

*Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit  
Nulli flebilior quam tibi*

The apt inappositeness of the words was too much for him. He shut the *Oxford Book of Latin Verse* and gave himself over to his thoughts.

Something had been wrong about that scene at which he had just assisted. Not that he doubted the genuineness of Terence's fear and sense of guilt. His part had been, in its way, an honest one. So, of course, had that of the priest. It was his own performance about which Sir Alison felt uneasy. Things must be thought out. He must go back to the beginning, to the mountain top.

At the moment of excitement, when Terence had suggested they should set up house together, he had accepted impulsively. It certainly would be great fun living with Terence. Life would not be dull with him for he always seemed to collect the best and most interesting people around him. He had such good ideas. He was always just off somewhere or just back from somewhere fascinating. He was rich. There would be lots of drink and parties. One could not, in a sense, want anybody better than Terence to launch one into London life. Alison was certainly flattered at being asked.

Yet, from the first, he had forebodings. The very attractions of the project held so many dangers. The money, the drink, the fun—he wondered whether Terence and himself had the same ideas about the laws of diminishing returns. The very disparity of their incomes might lead to all sorts of awkwardnesses. Terence had at times a carefree way with money that made Alison a little nervous. And the odd thing was, it was Terence who was doing the asking. Alison had no doubt about this. It was himself, Alison, who was to contribute the larger share of capital to the felicity of the *ménage*. The moral outlay, he feared, would all be his.

The household lasted for rather more than two years. Looking back through the haze of time Sir Alison could still see many details of that life but the episodes merged into one another and he could not always be certain of their order. Moreover, he found he could remember very little of the early, happier time, except that there had been such a time. Yes, things had not gone badly at first. He remembered how much, in the whirl of gaiety into which they had quickly been caught—surely in those days they had enjoyed themselves much more than the modern young?—he remembered how much he had enjoyed the moments of repose, the domestic moments when he, say, was in the bath and Terence was in the next room dressing for dinner and they were talking through the open doors. Or there would be a rapturous five minutes as they met by the fire adjusting their white ties and buttonholes and, over a quick drink, made a few unanimous brilliant judgements on their friends before going out their several ways. White ties! Did people wear such things, nowadays?

Then, in the early hours of one morning Alison had been awoken by the door-bell. Going down in his dressing-gown he had found a taxi man at the door.

'Does that belong here?' the man asked, pointing to the open door of the cab. Inside Alison saw Terence lying dead drunk on the floor in a mess of sick. They heaved him out of the taxi and

up to his bedroom and then Alison helped the man to clean his taxi. When they had finished he said :

‘Have a drink?’

‘I never touch the stuff,’ said the man with an expression as cold as the dawn that was appearing over the roofs. He did not, however, refuse the handsome tip Alison gave him as he paid the fare.

Alison stood a few moments at the door, watching the taxi go away up the street and savouring the harsh morning reality, then went in to undress Terence and put him to bed. He smelled horribly.

He was unconscious when Alison went to work that morning. Terence did not work and Alison found him still in bed in the evening, reading the newspaper, sulky.

‘Hullo, Terry! How are you? Have you come round?’

‘No!’

Alison waited. Then he said :

‘You were quite out.’

‘Yes.’

‘You were damned heavy!’

‘I don’t remember a thing.’

Again Alison waited. Then :

‘I settled with the taxi man.’

‘Mm.’ Terence was looking at the newspaper.

‘His cab was in rather a mess. I made it worth his while.’

‘You were right, I am sure.’

Alison left the room. Pretty cool! I am not going to stand that sort of thing very often, he said to himself.

This ugly episode confirmed certain unfavourable opinions that Alison had been forming, as he saw him at close quarters, about his companion: first that he was a dipsomaniac, secondly that he had no scruples about money, and thirdly that he was an insolent overweening type who would rather lose a friend than say ‘I am sorry.’ As to the dipsomania, Terence’s intemperance was not like that of most of Alison’s friends, an affair of occasional excesses which, now that they had left Oxford and were learning the alcoholic rules, became more and more rare. With Terence an opposite process was taking place. Drink for him had an atavistic glamour. The Pullens in their time had drunk deep. Each generation produced, not a connoisseur of wine—it was not that kind of drinking, though of course wine went down with the rest—but simply a drunkard. Terence had an uncle who had had to be shut up. In the new generation it was Terence who had inherited



the ancestral thirst for fiery waters. He found it increasingly unbearable to be sober. Alison discovered that he now began the day, not it is true very early, with gin.

As to money matters, Alison came to the conclusion that very few of his friend's actions could be assessed as merely thoughtless. Terence, it is true, liked to live in an extravagant manner, as though money were not a consideration. Actually he was a good deal interested in money. It amused him to score off people in a small way, to travel without a railway ticket, to exchange his umbrella at the club for a better one, to diddle tradesmen. He used to think these things out. He had devised a way of telephoning from a call-box without inserting pennies. A person perhaps needs some noble blood to be as ingeniously, as frankly ignoble as Terry. There was that business of the new dinner jacket, when the tailors had to decide between Terry's word and the word of their carman. They chose the word of the Honourable Terence Pullen and made him another dinner jacket free. So he got two, for all the while he had the first one in his cupboard, delivered correctly, as the man had said. And the man? Did he get the sack? Sir Alison still sometimes thought about that man and regretted that he had never done anything for him. The episode had taken place while he was away on holiday, but when he heard of it he ought to have done something or tried harder to make Terry do something about it.

When, therefore, Terry would look the other way while his friend tipped the porter or paid the taxi, Alison did not suppose him to be suddenly seized by a genuine oblivion. Terry knew perfectly well what was happening. He was simply seeing if he could get away with it, partly for the fun of the thing and partly because, for all his prosperity, he generally seemed to be short of ready money. Alison would try to make him come to some agreement about the division of the expenditure of petty cash, but Terence would wave aside any such idea in a lordly manner, complain that Alison was mean and give him a bottle of whisky to show that there was no ill feeling—which he would then proceed to drink himself. Alison no longer cared much for his friend.

Money matters would have brought the association to an end had there been nothing else. Terence was so aggressively inconsiderate. Their arrangement was to halve the gas and electricity charges. The bills that came in were enormous, for the reason that Terence would seldom take the trouble to turn off a light or a gas-fire. He paid no attention to anything Alison might say and twitted him in company for his meanness. One Monday

morning, coming home from a long weekend, Alison found his gramophone rumbling round in a great heat. It must have been revolving since Saturday afternoon when Terence too had gone away, leaving it on. Does he simply do it to exasperate, Alison asked himself?

Alison hated rows, but that night, after some guests had gone away, they had a row. He told Terry some home truths; to which Terry would only answer, 'You're so mean! Mean and prim!'

'Then I'm off!'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean I'm going! You can find somebody else to live with!'

Terence knew that Alison generally meant what he said.

'Oh, but you can't go, Alis!'

A look of real concern had come into Terry's face.

'Can't I? I shall.'

'Oh, but Alis, I so need someone like you.'

'Then find someone like me!'

'I mean you, I need you, Alis. You're such a tower of strength. Don't go. Here, have another drink. I'll do better in future, I promise.'

They sat up drinking and talking late and Terence made many concessions and promises.

'Then you'll stay, Alis?'

'All right.'

'Now I shall sleep.'

Next evening, when he came in, Alison found a present of a dozen bottles of champagne by his bed; and for some time Terence did indeed make a certain effort to be more pleasant. But Alison felt that their establishment was doomed. For one thing he had certain wild plans of his own. He was head over ears in love with Mrs. Walters. Why should not Mrs. Walters become Mrs. Whitehead, now, at once?

Gazing out of the train window into the darkness Sir Alison had a most clear vision in his mind of Daphne Walters, her great innocent eyes, her lovely forehead, her slow movements. He even believed that he could remember her smell. He had loved her furiously. Whatever people might say about her he was not going to be deflected. And many unfavourable things were said. Her record was certainly not satisfactory. Though she was barely twenty-three the names of quite a long list of young men would come to mind when her name was mentioned. Nobody thought it appropriate to suggest that Tom Walters had been ungentlemanly

in not feigning to be the guilty party in their divorce. Alison's family did not like her at all. Still, his impetuosity was not to be denied. He meant to take her over, if she would have him, for life.

His dream came to an abrupt end. Returning home one evening when he was not expected, he found Daphne Walters in bed with Terry. That, as far as he was concerned, was the end of both of them. He moved out of the flat at once. Daphne moved in. She had hopes of marrying Terry for, as her later life was to show, she had a great relish for getting married. But his religion would not allow it. She had to be content to live with him as his mistress.

Arrived at this point in his recollections, Sir Alison found himself unable to recapture any memory of that jab of pain he must have felt at the discovery of his betrayal. He could still see quite clearly those two heads on the pillow—his pillow by the way, for with a characteristic piece of bravado Terry had made use of his bed. 'Just for the fun of the thing,' he had probably said. But the vivid scene was so overlaid with wisdom after the event that Sir Alison could now feel no rancour towards those two heads. They were simply two dying heads on a pillow. The bitterness he must at first have felt towards his late friend was soon turned to a feeling of gratitude. What a benefactor Terry had been, to save him from that awful woman!

In the decades which passed between that fateful night and the next occasion on which he saw his head on a pillow, Alison from time to time set eyes on Terence Pullen. They had even in recent years found themselves on speaking terms. Terence was simply not worth not speaking to. No one indeed wanted to be long in his society, for he had become a prize bore. He would stand by the hour at the bar of a club to which Alison also belonged, telling interminable boastful stories about the black market, forged passports, contraband in the diplomatic bag. His company was generally regarded as 'crashing'; yet kind people could often be found to help him home. Sir Alison himself, though Pullen was quite unaware of the fact, had performed this thankless service only a year or two ago.

Terence Pullen's life, so far as one could judge, had been wholly unproductive. He had done nothing except to spend money on the gratification of sterile desires. He had become good at nothing, interesting about nothing. He was a perfect nuisance to his family with his debts, his drunkenness, his untidy love-affairs, his various squalid adventures which from time to time found their way into the papers. In his middle thirties they managed to ship him off for some years to Central Africa. Then, there he was, back again

against the bar, holding forth, unamusing, unhumble, irrepressible. So passed thirty-seven years in which he might have asked Alison to forgive him.

And now what? Here at the eleventh hour, at the seven hundred and nineteenth minute, Terence, having been on the wrong side all his life, was coming over, just in time, to the right side. Sir Alison presumed to form no opinions about Terence's faith; though quite recently he had heard him declaiming in a manner of such irreverent and boastful disloyalty as would, one might suppose, preclude any chance of reconciliation on this side of the grave. Perhaps, Sir Alison argued with himself, something is happening which I do not understand. The argument appealed to him, for he saw in it an exemption from the grievous decision that he was otherwise going to have to make. But he could not deceive himself for long with such an alibi. There might be things he did not understand; still, that was no excuse for giving up thinking. He must act according to his understanding, so far as it went. Things, as he saw them, were thus.

At long last, pushed up by subterranean warmth—by hell-fire, in fact—a tiny shoot of conscience had shown itself in the stony waste of Terry's spirit. For the first time in his life, or at least for many decades, Terry was experiencing moral anxiety. And what had he, Alison, done? He had said, Don't worry. Go to sleep. He had put his foot on the little crocus shoot and trodden it back into the ground. Was that right?

But Terence's soul, he told himself, was none of his business. Why bother? That argument, again, would not do. Terence's soul *was* his business, because he had been called in. But why, he asked himself, oh, why did he call in me? Were there not scores of people whom he had more deeply wronged? Daphne herself, for instance, and the child, were generally thought to have been fairly badly treated. Perhaps, as Terence looked back through his misdeeds, it was not till he came to the Alison period that he could remember feeling any sort of contrition at the time. His earlier sins therefore remained to him the most vivid. Whatever the cause, Alison had been called in. He was involved whether he liked it or not. And the more he thought, the more clear did his duty become. Terence having at last shown himself capable of moral anxiety, he ought to make sure that Terence died anxious.

There was one more argument by which Sir Alison sought to make his escape. You are quite sure, he said to himself, that you are not really being prompted by venom, by revengefulness? He examined himself carefully. No, frankly, he bore Terry no malice

whatever. He had utterly forgiven him years ago. It was for that very reason that he was now able, and bound, to unforgive him. Sir Alison would lend his shoulder to no last-minute scramble into heaven. The mere fact of a scramble made him doubtful whether it was heaven into which Terry was being heaved. Virtue, in his opinion, should be 'well tried through many a varying year.'

Sir Alison searched himself in vain for any feelings of triumph over the prostrate Terry. His sentiments, on the contrary, were almost tender. For he had been touched by the summons and by the sight of the dying man. In order to make absolutely sure of his duty, he now went over all his thoughts again—and came to the same hard conclusion. There was no way out. If not as a friend, he owed it to Terry as a human being not to be gentle with him. Oh Lord, what a beastly day this was! Looking at his watch he found that they were only a quarter of an hour away from Swindon.

His decision made, he allowed his thoughts to wander. He fell to imagining his own death-bed. How different from the anxious scene he had witnessed that afternoon! There at last would be relaxation! Retirement indeed! All responsibilities would then at last drop away. Nothing could then possibly be his fault. With his feet out, at full length, a spectator at last, he would lie watching for the curtain to go up—or was it down?

He got out at Swindon into a cold starlit night. The snow had stopped falling but there was a bitter wind on the platform. The train for his home was waiting on another platform. He went to a telephone box.

'Hullo! Is that you, Rosie?'

'Yes, papa.'

'Look, I'm afraid I shan't be able to get back tonight.'

'Oh, dear! What a pity! The duck's already cooking. It smells scrumptious. I was just about to get ready to come and meet you. Are you still in London?'

'Yes. I'm afraid this business has been more complicated than I expected. Tell your mother I'm very sorry about it, and sorry I couldn't ring up earlier.'

'All right.'

'Have you had a nice day, my dear? What have you been doing?'

'I can't remember. Oh yes, this afternoon I had a bath and washed my hair. It was lovely. And then I've been sitting in front of your fire looking at *Vogues* and *Country Lifes*. It was lovely.'

'Bless you! Good night, Rosie.'



'Good night, papa, and don't forget to hold yourself up straight.'

Really, thought Sir Alison, lying to one's own daughter like that—it's too silly! But explaining the whole business over the telephone would have been so involved. He walked out on to the platform again and asked a porter when the next train was for London. He found he had nearly three-quarters of an hour to wait. What a day! After walking two or three times up and down the station he decided to go and have a drink in an hotel in the town. The decision was an unfortunate one, for it occasioned an unfortunate meeting. As he left the hotel, coming out in the bright light of the doorway, a man passing in the street touched his cap to him.

'Good evening, sir!'

It was Fletcher, a handy-man who came and worked at his place in the mornings.

'Good evening, Fletcher.'

It was too silly. Fletcher would be there tomorrow morning telling the cook that he had seen him in Swindon and Helen and Rosie would be certain to hear of it. They would be bewildered. Here he was, playing cat and mouse with his own wife and daughter! When he gave them the full and truthful account of his movements, Rosie would say that he was bats. She was probably right. God, what a day, he muttered, as he strode up and down the station trying to keep warm. *Hodie diem perdidit*.

The train he got into was cold, his feet were wet and cold. When and where, he wondered, would he get any dinner? But his principal uneasiness came from the thought of that disagreeable and difficult interview for which he was returning to London. How sickening if he were to be too late! Sir Alison was feeling thoroughly out of sorts when at last he arrived again at Sussex Avenue. As he was shown in, Father Donnelly was about to go out of the house. He laid a friendly hand on Sir Alison's shoulder.

'Why, so you're back and all? Well now, he had a good friend in you indeed, God bless you. He passed away about an hour since. The Lord took him quietly at last, God rest his poor soul. He never woke again after you had gone.'

Sir Alison said nothing. The priest looked at him with concern.

'You're feeling bad then?'

'Yes.'

'Come and sit down for sure.' He took his arm.

'Where's the——?'

'Why, of course. Along here. That door on the left.'

In the lavatory Sir Alison, for the second time that day, fell on his knees. Leaning over the seat, he was very sick indeed.

## The Aleijadinho

BY JOHN BURY

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IN 1867, when Sir Richard Burton visited the eighteenth-century gold town of São João d'El Rei in the mountainous interior of Brazil, his attention was called to the Franciscan church. Told that the highly sculptured façade was the 'handicraft of a handless man, generally known as the Aleijadinho, or Little Cripple,' Burton became curious and enquired further. He learned that the Aleijadinho had worked 'with tools adjusted by an assistant to the stumps which represented arms.' But the widely travelled and even more widely read Victorian was not unduly surprised. He could quote a precedent. 'His,' writes Burton, 'is not the only case on record of surprising activity in the trunk of a man or of a woman. Witness the late Miss Biffin.' Possibly Burton remembered the obituary notices of Sarah Biffin who had died in 1850. She had been born in 1784, without hands and feet. Notwithstanding her disability, she had learned to paint, was awarded the Society of Arts Medal in 1821, and patronised by the Royal Family. Burton was an exceptionally gifted and observant traveller, but unfortunately his interest in the Aleijadinho did not extend to any detailed study of his life or art. Baroque and Rococo had long been out of fashion in England, eclipsed by Classical and Gothic Revivals; and Burton shared his contemporaries' distaste for the former styles. His brief reference to the Aleijadinho is interesting, nevertheless, as the first of the very few mentions of the sculptor's name outside his native country.

'The Aleijadinho' was the nickname of Antônio Francisco Lisboa (1738-1814), an artist who although the central figure of an original colonial style is still almost unknown beyond South America; and, to understand his work and its significance, we must glance at the origins and development of the gold mining communities among whom he lived and worked. Gold was discovered in the mountainous interior *sertões* of Brazil at the end of the seventeenth century. Certain discoveries may already have been made in the 1680's, but the official announcement did not come until 1695. In the following years new deposits of gold were discovered in the same area, and subsequently diamonds farther north. The gold had been discovered by Creole explorers from the Southern Brazilian *Capitania* of São Paulo, as a result of long years of search and after great hardships. They had been encouraged by the

Kingdom of Portugal with promises of titles and rights over their discoveries ; but since the total population of the Paulista territories in the year 1700 probably did not exceed 15,000, they were quickly overwhelmed by the rush of immigrants from other parts of Brazil and from Portugal ; and in the wake of the immigrants came thousands of African slaves. So acute was the hostility between the Paulistas and the newcomers, that serious armed clashes occurred, known as the *Guerra dos Emboabas*. By 1708 these conflicts had been decisively ended in favour of the immigrants.

The eighteenth-century miners' technique enabled them to extract only the alluvial gold ; but between 1700 and 1770 Brazil produced about half the quantity of gold which was obtained from the whole of the rest of the world during the three centuries 1500 to 1800. Production rose sharply from the time of the discoveries in the 1690's ; reached its peak in the 1760's, and thereafter fell rapidly. Much of the gold was used by Portugal to meet the unfavourable balance of trade with England, which resulted from the Methuen Treaty of 1703. The Methuen Treaty effectively gave English manufacturers a monopoly of supply in the Portuguese Empire ; and, since payment was assured in gold, English industries were greatly stimulated and new techniques were invented. The sequel to the expansion of the textile industry was an increase in sheep-raising at the expense of cultivation. This in turn reduced the manpower requirement of English farming and further encouraged the migration to the towns whose profitable growing industries were demanding more and more labour. Thus the Industrial Revolution in England, with all its incalculable and world-wide consequences, may in some part be attributed to the labour of African slaves, shipped by the Portuguese from Angola and Mozambique to wash the gold from the hillsides and rivers of the remote highlands of Brazil. In return the British navy protected the Portuguese treasure ships from French and other enemies on the Atlantic crossing.

The political history of Minas Gerais, or General Mines, the tangled mountain-area of Central Brazil in which the principal gold-workings were concentrated, centres around the personalities of its governors, Portuguese *fidalgos* and generals with more or less despotic powers. Their task was two-fold ; first, to impose law and order upon a heterogeneous society of gold rush adventurers ; secondly, to ensure that the Crown obtained its full *Quinto*, or fifth part, of the gold production. These objects were achieved by drastic measures, characteristic of eighteenth-century colonial government. All roads leading out of the mining area were

officially closed, except that to Rio de Janeiro, from which the bullion was shipped to Portugal. Squadrons of dragoons dealt savagely with smugglers and law-breakers, and huge prisons were built in the principal towns. The miners, however, did not submit without a struggle. In 1713 they imposed their will on a governor who tried to introduce a stricter system of taxation ; and in 1720 they attempted to repeat the performance, taking the new governor by surprise with an armed insurrection and forcing him to sign fifteen articles which effectively safeguarded their liberties. But they appear to have underestimated the man with whom they were dealing. D. Pedro de Almeida e Portugal, Conde de Assumar, was a young man who had already distinguished himself in the War of the Spanish Succession and was later to win greater renown in the Portuguese wars in India. Waiting only to gather his forces he seized the leaders, blinded them, executed one in public with the utmost barbarity and imprisoned the rest. The houses of all who had taken part in the insurrection were burnt.

The name of Assumar is still detested in Minas Gerais, but his methods were effective : for the next fifty years the Province gave its governors little trouble, though there remained throughout the period two ever-present dangers to security, the danger of slave rebellion and the danger of outlaws. The enormous negro slave population of Minas Gerais, which had threatened insurrection and a general massacre of the white colonists during the governorship of the Conde de Assumar, caused much anxiety. In mining the relationship of master and slave was less personal than in agriculture ; and the treatment of slaves in Minas Gerais was harsher than in the sugar plantations of North-Eastern Brazil. During the seventeenth century, the runaway slaves of Pernambuco had established a great *Quilombo* or fortified settlement, which was only reduced, after many years, by a major military operation known as the War of the Palmares. No *Quilombo* was ever organised in Minas Gerais owing to the efficiency of ruthless *Capitões do Mato*, or Bush Captains, who were employed to hunt down maroons and runaways with the aid of mastiffs. The fear and distrust of negroes, shown by the white colonists in the mining province, extended even to mulattos ; and no person who was a mulatto within the fourth degree was permitted to hold any municipal office, a prohibition unknown elsewhere throughout colonial Brazil. In a highly intelligent and sensitive mulatto, like the Aleijadinho, this discrimination must have aroused deep feelings of resentment.

The second danger to security in Minas Gerais, reflected by the

legislation of the period, vividly reveals the frontier character of the remote mining settlements. As in other frontier societies, the criminal and outlaw, living in the wilds, became a serious menace. Desperate crimes were alleged against outlaw *sertanejos*, or denizens of the *sertão*, backland, in colonial Minas Gerais; and farther north we read of—

A set of ruffians, calling themselves *Valentões*, or Bravos, who used to frequent fairs and festivals for the pleasure of taking up quarrels, and intimidating all other persons. They would take their station at a cross-road and compel all passengers to dismount, take off their hats, and lead their horses till they were out of sight—or fight, as the alternative. A struggle against one of these desperadoes, armed with sword and knife, was more perilous than the roughest encounter of a knight, with spear and shield. They trained dogs of extraordinary size to be as savage as themselves, and yet in such obedience that they would drink rum at command; and they wore green beads around their necks, which were believed by the credulous to have the virtue of rendering them invulnerable. So many of these knights-errant of vulgar life came to their deserved end, that towards the close of the eighteenth century the race became extinct.

Gold production continued to increase throughout the middle decades of the eighteenth century. For nearly thirty years (1735–1763) the governorship of the *Capitania* was held by one of the most sympathetic figures in Brazilian colonial history, Gomes Freyre de Andrade, Conde de Bobadella, equally distinguished as soldier and statesman; and his long rule coincided with the period of maximum economic prosperity and social harmony in Minas Gerais. The annual treasure fleet which sailed from Rio de Janeiro to Lisbon was, in 1753, valued conservatively at three million sterling. The decline in the output of the mines began within a few years of Gomes Freyre's death. By 1790 production had dropped to a third, and by 1815 to an eighth, of the 1760 figure. But the Portuguese crown would not, or could not, accept the fact that the mines had been exhausted; and, as production dropped, royal taxes weighed heavily on the impoverished miners. The economic hardships of inflexible mercantilism and unrealistic taxation bred a precocious Brazilian nationalism. Sublime ideals of liberty and independence were absorbed from the writings of the French philosophers; while the successful rebellion of the Thirteen Colonies gave the Mineiros a North-American precedent. From 1783 to 1788 the *Capitania* was governed by D. Luiz da Cunha e Menezes, a *fidalg*o whose reactionary and tyrannical



behaviour aroused bitter animosity, till feeling came to a head in the abortive, but deeply significant, Conspiracy of 1789. This was an upper-class movement, like the Insurrection of 1720: but the conspirators of 1789, unlike their predecessors, dreamed of Brazilian independence. They were lawyers, administrators, militia officers and priests. Three were poets of some distinction. To one of them, Claudio Manuel da Costa, translator of Adam Smith and brains of the Conspiracy, is attributed a remarkable mock-epic poem, the *Cartas chilenas*, exposing the hated governor D. Luiz da Cunha e Menezes to contempt and ridicule. Another prominent conspirator, Thomaz Antônio Gonzaga, was a charming lyric poet whose verses are ranked by Burton, a good judge, with those of Metastasio. Gonzaga, who had English blood in his veins, addressed his most famous poems to his betrothed Dona Maria Dorothea Brandão. He records in passing a custom of his day which throws an interesting light on the sophisticated, if not effeminate, manners of upper class Mineiros towards the end of the century. It was Gonzaga's duty to embroider the wedding garments of his betrothed, Dona Maria. More serious than this implication of excessive refinement, the conspirators of 1789 with one notable exception, the *Alferes*, or Ensign, Joaquim da Silva Xavier, were too theoretical and idealistic to command popular support. Nevertheless they represented the only politically-conscious class in the colony, and as such deserve the honoured place they have ever since held in Brazilian estimation, as the fathers of national independence.

The *Inconfidencia* or Treason of 1789 was punished with a severity which has given its leaders an aura of martyrdom, though only Joaquim da Silva Xavier was executed. Nothing could better illustrate the changes in Mineiro society which had occurred during the interval than the contrasting character and aims of the leaders of 1720 and those of 1789. But the punishments inflicted indicate that, during the same seventy years, the attitude of the Portuguese crown and colonial governors had hardly changed. And as in 1720, severity certainly discouraged any further ideas of rebellion. Minas entered into a poverty stricken decline, from which it was only momentarily stirred by the declaration of the independence of Brazil in 1822. The Aleijadinho belonged to the same generation as the *Inconfidentes*. His art, like their frustrated politics, must be regarded against a background of economic ruin and social discontent.

Very little is known of the Aleijadinho's life and the few details supplied by his only original biographer, Rodrigo Brêtas, have

given rise to endless speculation. Rodrigo José Ferreira Brêtas was a schoolmaster of Ouro Preto and something of an antiquary, whose gossip biography of 'the late Antônio Francisco Lisboa, the great sculptor,' was published serially in a local newspaper during 1858. Since the Aleijadinho had only died forty-four years earlier, Brêtas was in a position to consult citizens of Ouro Preto who in their youth had known the sculptor as an old man. Unfortunately, in spite of his qualifications, his facts are far from trustworthy; yet it is upon Rodrigo Brêtas' narrative that all studies of the Aleijadinho must primarily be based.

We are told by Brêtas that Antônio Francisco Lisboa was an illegitimate child; that his father, Manoel Francisco Lisboa, was 'a talented Portuguese architect' and his mother a negress slave. Portugal followed the Roman custom, so the slave-born child would have been freed at birth or baptism by his father. He was taught to read and write, and possibly acquired some Latin: this was the limit of his formal education. Describing his personal appearance Brêtas tells us that:

Antônio Francisco was a dark mulatto, had a loud voice, spoke quickly and was of a passionate temperament; his stature was slight, his body fat and ill-formed, his face and head round-shaped and bulging, his hair black and curly, his beard thick and abundant, his forehead wide, his nose regular and somewhat pointed at the tip, his lips thick, his ears large and his neck short.

As a young man the Aleijadinho is said to have enjoyed perfect health and indulged freely in sensual pleasures. He had an illegitimate son whom he named after his father, Manoel Francisco. Suddenly, Brêtas would have us believe, in the year 1777, when he was thirty-nine years old, he fell victim to a mutilating disease. This disease, the central feature of his life, has already become the subject of a copious Brazilian literature. Interest has focussed on two aspects; first the general question of the extent and nature of the injuries to his hands; secondly the technical question of what his disease was. The first question embraces the main paradox of his work—'the handicraft of a handless man,' as Burton so well expressed it. The second is a matter of curiosity rather than of direct importance to the understanding of his art. References to the Aleijadinho have appeared recently in two English magazines; and in both articles he is described as having lost his hands and worked with chisel and mallet strapped to his stumps. This story dates from 1818 when John Luccock visited Minas Gerais and was independently repeated by another traveller,



[Photo: Marcel Gauthier]

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD JESUS AT CONGONHAS DO CAMPO.



HEAD OF DANIEL.

[Photo : Marcel Gauthier]



HEAD OF JONAH.

[Photo : Marcel Gautherot





EZEKIEL.

[Photo : Marcel Gautherot]



EZEKIEL.

[Photo : Marcel Gautherot]



DANIEL WITH LION.

[Photo: The Author



[Photo : Marcel Gautherot]

DANIEL.



JOEL, HOSEA AND DANIEL.



Friedrich von Weech, who visited Minas in 1827. It is evident that Sir Richard Burton was told the same tale forty years later. But the French visitor, Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, who travelled through Minas in 1816-1818, refers to the Aleijadinho as having merely lost the *use* of his hands. Thus within a few years of his death, two conflicting accounts were current.

Much varied evidence has been brought to bear in attempts to clear up the doubt. Careful studies have been made of his handwriting from 1790 onwards. In the earlier documents he wrote in a firm flowing style, but from 1796 there is a noticeable deterioration, and the last extant specimen, dated 1802, is written in a strikingly uneven and tremulous manner. These indications of a faltering hand are supported by parallel changes in the character and quality of his sculpture. A marked change is evident between the style and technique of his earlier period (1770-1794) and of his later (1796-1809). The earlier period, which was the period of his maturity, is characterised by the consistently high standard of the workmanship and by the harmony, clarity and serenity of its general spirit. The later work, in contrast, though it includes his supreme masterpieces, is not always of the same standard. The statues of the Twelve Prophets (1800-1807) at Congonhas do Campo are the most remarkable and impressive of all his productions. On the other hand the sixty-four life-sized wooden images (1796-1800) which he carved for the Via Crucis chapels in the same village include much that is crude and grotesque. If the later work is uneven in quality, it is also very different in character; more thoughtful, more grave in spirit and, above all, more expressionistic in style than the earlier sculpture. The acute pain of his disease, which he is said to have borne impatiently, may well have been responsible.

Neither the evidence of his handwriting nor that of his work is in any sense conclusive. It was hoped, therefore, that the problem would be solved once and for all by an examination of his bones, which were disinterred in 1930 from their resting-place in the vault of the Bôa Morte in the parish church of Antônio Dias. The skull and the larger bones were recognisable, though somewhat rotted; but of the small bones, as of the hands and feet, there was no trace. Once again the evidence is incomplete. Whether the smaller bones had decomposed after burial, or whether he had been buried without hands and feet remains an unanswered question. The only other light which can be cast on the problem comes from the recorded evidence of the Aleijadinho's contemporaries. First there is a fragment, quoted by Brêtas, from a work attributed to a certain

*Capitão* and *Vereador* (Alderman) named Joaquim José da Silva, and said to date from 1790. The Aleijadinho is here referred to as 'so sickly that he has to be carried everywhere and in order to work has to have his chisels strapped to him.' Secondly there is the hearsay evidence of the Baron von Eschwege, a German engineer and geologist employed in Minas Gerais in the service of the Crown of Portugal. Writing in 1811 he mentions the Aleijadinho, using the present tense, as 'a cripple with paralysed hands.' But it is clear that Eschwege had not seen or met him personally. Finally there is the account given by Rodrigo Brêtas in 1858, presumably compiled by him from the reminiscences of old people who had known the sculptor :

From 1777 onwards [writes Rodrigo Brêtas], he began to suffer severely from diseases, which were in great part perhaps, brought on by his venereal excesses. Some claim that he suffered from an epidemic which, under the name of *Zamparina*<sup>1</sup> had raged in this Province a short time before. Those who did not die of it were almost always left deformed and paralysed. Others again assert that he had syphilis complicated with scurvy. The fact remains that, whether through negligence in treating its early stages, or because the malignity of the disease was such that its progress could not be stayed, Antônio Francisco lost all his toes, so that he could no longer walk but only crawl on his knees. His fingers withered, curled up and began to drop off, leaving him only his thumbs and index fingers, and even these almost without movement. The fearful pain that he constantly suffered, and his bitter irascible temper, drove him at times to the extremity of amputating his own fingers, using the chisel with which he was working.<sup>2</sup> His eyelids became permanently inflamed so that the inside of the lids were visible. He lost nearly all his teeth and his mouth twisted into a leer. His chin and lower lip became swollen. In this manner the unfortunate man acquired such a sinister and ferocious expression that those who came across him unexpectedly were shocked and startled by his appalling and loathsome appearance. When these terrible symptoms showed themselves in Antônio Francisco, a woman named Helena, who lived

<sup>1</sup> The Venetian singer and courtesan Anna Zamperini was for four years (1770-1774) the rage of Lisbon, and a word was coined from her name to describe the contagious passion which she inspired. An epidemic which laid waste Rio de Janeiro during the viceroyalty of Luis de Vasconcellos e Souza (1779-1790) was named *Zamparina* in reference to its contagious and nervous character ; and 'the Zamperini' herself is said to have fallen victim to the epidemic during its earlier course in Portugal. Characteristic symptoms were diarrhoea, and subsequently paralysis.

<sup>2</sup> 'He placed the chisel upon the finger to be amputated and ordered one of his slaves, who were apprentices in the art of carving, to give the chisel a hard blow with a mallet' (Note by Rodrigo Brêtas).

in the street named Areião or Carrapixo in Ouro Preto, said that he had taken a large dose of *Cardina*<sup>1</sup> with the intention of improving his artistic skill, and that this was the cause of the evil which had befallen him.

Brêtas deserves to be quoted at length not for the intrinsic value of his evidence but for the use put to it by a number of Brazilian doctors who have recently attempted *diagnoses à posteriori*. Three principal theories have been put forward—leprosy, boubas and syphilis. The theory of leprosy has the advantage of accounting perfectly for the symptoms as described by Brêtas, and has consequently found many supporters. Disadvantages are that it is a theory of the last twenty years; that none of the older writers mention it; and that leprosy was a very well-known disease in colonial Minas which would certainly have been recognised. To overcome this last and most serious criticism, Dr. René Laclette has suggested that the Aleijadinho might have been a victim of nervous leprosy, a variant then rare in Brazil. The theory of boubas, or *framboesia tropica*, has been persuasively advanced by Dr. Floriano Lemos. Boubas is a disease produced by a microbe of the same family as that of syphilis, and is known, says Lemos, to have existed in eighteenth-century Minas Gerais. The initial lesion is extremely painful and the subsequent development of the disease leads to mutilations which would account for all those recorded of the Aleijadinho. The theory of syphilis has the support of Rodrigo Brêtas, and could account for the Aleijadinho's symptoms on the assumption that they were somewhat exaggerated by Brêtas' informants. The general case for syphilis has been argued by Dr. Americo Valerio. A more elaborate case has been presented by Dr. José Mariano who has suggested that the Aleijadinho, a hereditary syphilitic, suffered a cerebral hæmorrhage in 1777 with consequent partial paralysis; but that a species of accommodation permitted the victim to retain the interrupted use of certain members.

Whatever the Aleijadinho's disease may have been, and whatever the exact nature of the symptoms, it is clear that his already deformed body was horribly disfigured. The effects upon his

<sup>1</sup> 'The charlatans of that time, it is said, advertised for sale a substance which had the power of enlarging the intellect, or alternatively of extinguishing the capacity of an organ to feel, or again of promoting extraordinary growth' (Note by Rodrigo Brêtas). The story that the Aleijadinho's disease resulted from overdoses of *Cardina* was repeated to Saint-Hilaire in 1818. He writes as follows: 'While still very young, I was told, the sculptor decided to take I know not what beverage, with the intention of increasing his vitality and elevating his spirit; but in the event he lost the use of his extremities.'

character are related by Brêtas in dramatic terms. The inquisitive stares which his appearance provoked humiliated him, and his proud and sensitive nature was deeply mortified. He became bitter, suspicious and subject to violent outbursts of rage. Even when congratulated with every courtesy by admirers of his work, he would show perverse ingenuity in discovering mocking and contemptuous meanings in their praise. He went to extreme lengths to avoid observation.

After he had fallen victim to his fatal disease [writes Brêtas], he took to wearing a long coat of thick blue cloth which fell to below his knees, trousers and waistcoat of any convenient material and black shoes made as if his feet were normal. When riding he also wore a great cloak of black cloth with long sleeves. He wore his collar turned up, and a hood as well, together with a hat of brown *Braguez* felt, its broad brim held to the crown by two straps.

He left his home at daybreak and returned after dark. At work he had screens and awnings put up round him so that he was completely hidden from sight. Withdrawn from all social intercourse except with a few intimate friends among whom he could still be cheerful, he found some compensation in reading. 'His favourite reading was the Bible,' Brêtas tells us, 'also it is said, works on medicine, more especially on chemistry.'

Son of a slave-owning father, the Aleijadinho became a slave-owner himself. Brêtas records the names of four of his slaves, Maurício, Agostinho, Januário and Anna. The first two assisted their master in his art. Januário, 'an ignorant black' probably fresh from Africa, tried to commit suicide with a razor 'in order not to have to serve so hideous a master,' but later became a faithful and devoted servant. Maurício was the Aleijadinho's favourite slave.

It was Maurício [Brêtas tells us], who adapted the chisels and the mallet to the imperfect hands of the great sculptor. The Aleijadinho always shared equally with Maurício the payments which he received for his work. It was nevertheless remarkable that the slave showed so much fidelity. The Aleijadinho was not always able to control his temper and frequently beat Maurício severely with the very mallet that the slave had attached to his hand.

Though well paid, the crippled sculptor was careless with his money. He paid for the education of his legitimate step-brother, Padre Felix Antônio Lisbôa, gave much away in alms, was more than once robbed and is said to have been a victim of frauds. He

went blind in 1812 and died in 1814 in the tiny dwelling of his daughter-in-law, the mulatress Joana Lopes, who had married his illegitimate son in 1800. Writing in 1858, Brêtas remarks :

The Aleijadinho's daughter-in-law still lives ; and the cottage in which he died exists too, though in a bad state of repair. In one of the little inner rooms may be seen the place where, resting on a platform (three planks supported by blocks of wood, just raised above the earth floor), he lay for nearly two years, one of his sides horribly ulcerated—he whose distinguished works of art had so much honoured his native country.

Inevitably the strange and morbid incidents of the sculptor's life, together with his genius, provoked the rapid growth of legends, which very possibly began while he was still alive, were certainly rife within a few years of his death, and continue widely current to this day. It is still said in Ouro Preto, for example, that he worked in the dark. Brêtas' biography is full of marvellous tales designed to illustrate the Aleijadinho's proud and suspicious nature, and the pre-eminence of his artistic genius, his naturalism, his ability as a portrait sculptor and his talent for caricature. Brêtas understood that these tales were exaggerated, if not downright inventions, and remarks that :

Any individual who becomes celebrated and admired, in whatsoever manner, becomes subject to those who, loving the marvellous, exaggerate anything extraordinary about him without limit ; and since these exaggerations accumulate, one after another, there is finally built up a veritably ideal being. This has to some extent happened to Antônio Francisco.

In spite of this comment the whole tone of Brêtas' writing shows that he was himself deeply infected by the legendary view ; and his biography has therefore to be treated with the greatest caution. Nevertheless, even his half legendary stories, many of them probably derived from the eighty-nine-year-old midwife Joana Lopes, have a certain indirect value. Discounting their exaggerations, one important fact at least emerges—that the Aleijadinho was not simply a sick man ; he was also a neurotic. His dread of being seen may be explained, as Brêtas explains it, by his consciousness of the horror his appearance inspired. But the perverse fear which caused him to imagine that even his admirers were somehow mocking him can only be explained as a form of mania. There are other evidences of instability of a kind which might be expected in the brilliant nervous offspring of a Portuguese father and an African mother. In buying slaves he followed the custom of his



father's people, the Portuguese masters, and followed the same tradition in thrashing Maurício. But his fits of uncontrollable temper are significant, especially since he shared his earnings with this same slave, thus normally treating him as an equal. Without accepting these stories literally, we must admit that they indicate a deep underlying strife between loyalties to the seemingly irreconcilable traditions of his parents. Artistically this dual personality can be detected in his later work (1796-1807) at Congonhas do Campo.

Brêtas dates the onset of the Aleijadinho's disease from the year 1777; we know, however, that his lameness had an earlier history. An entry in the Current Accounts ledger of a church in Ouro Preto records expenses incurred in 1776 for the hire of two negroes 'who carried Antônio Francisco in order that he might inspect the plans.' Brêtas also implies that the disease brought about a fundamental change in the sculptor's character; but there are reasons for rejecting such a simplified hypothesis. As a sensitive youth his actual freedom would have made him all the more conscious of his slave birth and illegitimacy. As a mulatto his status was equivocal, in a society built up on the recognition of only two classes, European masters and African slaves. Handicapped by his mixed blood and physical deformities from full normal self-expression and the companionship of his contemporaries on equal terms, it is likely that a perturbation of his nature was developed at an early age. It is significant that he never married. Brêtas does indeed refer to 'his venereal excesses' which has led imaginative critics to picture the youthful Aleijadinho as an unrestrained sensualist. But such lurid ideas may safely be discounted. On the contrary, it is reasonable to suppose that he was the victim of life-long inhibitions, and that, as he grew older, even without the effects of disease, those inhibitions would eventually have isolated him from the society of his fellow men.

## Robert Browning's Early Friends

BY S. K. RATCLIFFE

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LAST year in the summer number of the CORNHILL there was published an essay on the early poems of Robert Browning. Written with perceptive thoroughness, it was a welcome analysis and exposition. Mr. Cohen is the first critic to explore the inviting field lying between *Pauline* and *Bells and Pomegranates*, to trace the artistic and philosophical influences in the beginnings of a poet whose originality has never been called in question. There were, however, other influences at work, of people and places, with which Mr. Cohen was not concerned. They happen to be of unusual interest, and the more so because of their unlikeness to any that we know of elsewhere in the experience of a modern English man of genius.

The Browning parents were South Londoners. Their two children were born in Camberwell, and Robert lived with them until his marriage at thirty-four. He was twenty-eight when the family removed to Hatcham on the edge of Kent and Surrey country. It was from this house that the letters to Elizabeth Barrett were written. Carlyle, who made their acquaintance about that time, had a high regard for the elders, whom he described as of respectable position among the Dissenters—a nice turn of phrase, perhaps, for a Scot who had sprung from a small body of Presbyterian seceders.

The surroundings of the home in Camberwell, which may be contrasted with that of the Ruskins on near-by Herne Hill, were wholly suburban and nonconformist. And if a natural inference is that they were unpromising for a poet, the answer might well be that judged by results they must have been almost ideal. What father, for instance, could possibly have been better than Robert Browning the elder? He had a position in the Bank of England that gave him security and a good margin of leisure. He was a cultivated man with abundant literary and historical knowledge, especially of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. A book-lover and book-buyer, he possessed, it was said, the scent of a hound and a bulldog's grip for an old volume. His house was overflowing with books in several languages. They were so well selected that when late in life the poet found himself able to arrange

a library to his own liking, the larger portion consisted of his father's 6,000.

Robert left school at fourteen and tutors counted for little by comparison with the resources close at hand. Languages were easy for him and he read everything that came in his way. Elizabeth Barrett, as he was later to learn, was warned off a certain section of her father's shelves, but no inhibition hampered the boy in Southampton Street, and the provision was wonderfully rich. If the sixty-two volumes of Bagster's English Poets were there and generally acceptable, so also was Voltaire along with many another subversive author. Quarles's *Emblems* and the seventeenth century at large were balanced by *The Fable of the Bees* and plenty more from the age of reason. Actually, nearly all the persons of importance whimsically brought together in the *Parleyings* were friends of the poet's youth. Father and son shared an inexhaustible enthusiasm for the romance of history and literature, for eccentric characters of any kind and the legends of all lands. They enjoyed a kindred facility in drawing, knew the painters and were keenly interested in technique. Browning said that *The Art of Painting in All Its Branches* (1778) by the Flemish artist Gérard de Lairese gave him in boyhood greater delight than any other book. He read the two solid volumes over and over. This treatise and Vasari's *Lives* prepared him for the Dulwich Gallery (there was as yet no National) and helped to stock his memory with the precise knowledge of pictures that is revealed throughout his poems. His chief preferences were formed before the first visit to Italy. Not otherwise was it with that crowded miscellany, *The Wonders of the Little World*, by the seventeenth-century divine Nathaniel Wanley. Here were hundreds of anecdotes which the Brownings knew by heart.

There was at least one department of his father's enterprise which, we may be sure, was without parallel in the libraries of his fellows. He collected books and pamphlets concerning the occult sciences of the Renaissance. When Hall Griffin, for his painstaking biography, set out to examine the sources of *Paracelsus* and *Sordello*, he was led to the conclusion that Browning's special researches had been overstated. There was little need for him to dig in obscure corners; the materials for the most part had been assembled by his parent, singularly co-operative in advance without dreaming of it. This unique bank official had purchased the works of Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa. Browning was as much at home among them as he was in the Florence of his dreams when composing the scenes and songs of *Pippa Passes* in Dulwich Wood.

He had no lack of companionship in the suburb. Three clever

and high-spirited cousins, Silverthornes, were always at call. Alfred Domett, self-exiled Waring of the poem, was an object of particular affection. He was not the only member of the group to make for New Zealand at the birth of the colony. Another of them was to reach the High Court bench in Bombay. Moreover, in the Browning household there was harmony and mutual admiration. The father's warm heart and liberal mind were matched in the mother by a serene piety which tempered the Puritan dogma. Until her latest years she was a punctual attendant at the Walworth Congregational church, which her husband joined for her sake. They listened to Calvinistic sermons which seem to have passed them by, while Robert and his friends made fun of the Boanerges preachers.

The boy's extraordinary powers were taken for granted. He was eager and continuously occupied—in music and drawing, fencing and country walks. The parents, wholly unlike the Ruskins, understood the principle of freedom, although, to be sure, Mrs. Browning did not always realise what her affectionate co-operation might lead to. In his seventeenth year Browning picked up a copy of *Queen Mab*, labelled 'Mr. Shelley's atheistical poem, very scarce.' Thereupon he asked his mother for a birthday present, all of Shelley that she could procure. The effect was startling. He became a professed atheist and practising vegetarian. He endured the inescapably meagre rations for some two years, until a warning of eye trouble caused him to lapse. He was emerging from this stage when his father, who was one of the £100 proprietors of the new London University, entered him at the college in Gower Street.

Meanwhile, and earlier even than might have been looked for, an emotional awakening had occurred, by virtue of a company of friends who made a pleasant contrast to Camberwell. A colleague of the elder Browning in the Bank, named Earles, was living in Hackney. The families were on visiting terms, and it was for the Earles children that Robert senior wrote a metrical version of the Pied Piper, in due time to be eclipsed, for the benefit of Willie Macready, by the ballad everybody knows. During the first half of the nineteenth century Hackney and its environs were no less desirable than Camberwell and Dulwich for City men able to live at the distance of a carriage drive from their offices. Young Robert in his teens frequently walked the whole distance, and never without a thrill from the common sights of the City. The Hackney circle also was nonconformist, but of a decidedly heretical tinge, its social centre being the Unitarian chapel. Its most important

member was W. J. Fox, whom Browning always spoke of as his literary father. And Fox's close friend was Benjamin Flower, whose two daughters, Eliza and Sarah, were respectively nine and seven years older than Browning.

Benjamin Flower occupies a modest place in the long procession of fighters for a free Press. After being in France during the first stage of the Revolution he became editor of the *Cambridge Intelligencer*. It was one of the very few provincial papers hostile to Pitt's war policy, which Flower denounced as wicked and absurd. In 1799, like Wordsworth before him, he made a sharp attack upon that tireless controversialist, Richard Watson Bishop of Llandaff. Summoned to the bar of the House of Lords, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine of £100. The prosecution was outrageous, and one is pleased to note that the Bishop had nothing to do with it. Flower lost his newspaper and set up as a printer at Great Harlow, Essex, his birthplace. While in Newgate he was visited by Eliza Gold, a teacher from the West Country who had been dismissed from her school for subscribing to the *Intelligencer*. They were married. She died in 1810, leaving two little girls who grew up at Harlow without attending school. Their father taught them himself, with such tutorial aid as the little town afforded. Flower gave up his press in 1827 and retired to Dalston, thus becoming a neighbour of his old friend.

William Johnson Fox was a man singularly representative of his time. Born in 1786, he was a weaver boy in Norwich when the chance came his way of a training for the pulpit at Homerton, one of the many academies which in the eighteenth century were of great service to the sons of Nonconformists debarred from the old universities. Fox turned before long to Unitarianism and in 1817 left a small charge at Chichester in response to a call from London. His eloquence was remarkable, as great audiences in the country were afterwards to learn. We have descriptions of it by many well-known auditors, men and women. By 1824 Fox was the minister of a new chapel in South Place, Finsbury Circus, and was soon to be owner-editor of the *Monthly Repository*. This he transformed from a denominational organ into a magazine of broad social outlook, with a literary quality which made it a rival of *Fraser's* and the *New London*. John Stuart Mill was among his contributors. He gave Harriet Martineau her start, and persuaded Henry Crabb Robinson to write his recollections of Goethe. He combined daily journalism with incessant lecturing. As a leader-writer Fox had few competitors in London for two decades. He wrote for Mill the opening article of the *Westminster Review*; and



when the launching of the *Daily News* proved to be too much for Charles Dickens, Fox came to the rescue with a leader in the first issue. As a critic of the London theatre he was more active and profuse than Hazlitt; and by the time of Browning's advent he was an editor and reviewer of conspicuous influence.

Browning was only in his thirteenth year when the visits to Hackney began. The Fowler sisters were often to be met with. They were alike beautiful and ethereal. They were intelligent, sweet-tempered, well-read, and overflowing with the sensibility then deemed essential to young womanhood. Eliza was a musical genius. She composed from childhood, with a spontaneity that told against the rigour of technical training. Sarah wrote lyrics and ballads without effort. The sisters were a pair of song-birds. Browning, who shared their love of singing and the piano, found them irresistible. They were affectionately admiring of his looks and ways, and of his mature conversation, while, as Richard Garnett observes, Eliza Flower in her twenties was the incarnation of a young poet's dream. He read his Byronic verses to her. They were in a folder marked *Incognita*. She showed them to Fox who, as Browning said years later, praised them not a little and so comforted him not a little. But he was against publication and the MS. was destroyed. Eliza had made a copy, which was given to Browning, together with his letters, by Mrs. Bridell-Fox after her father's death in 1864. He burnt them all. To the end of his life he cherished her memory in reverential tenderness. She died in the year of his marriage.

This ideal early friendship was interrupted for several years for obvious reasons. Browning was an active if casual student, attending lectures at Guy's Hospital as well as at University College, and was busy among his companions. Benjamin Flower died in 1829, leaving his daughters in the care of Fox. For a time they were members of his household. Eliza began at once to act as his amanuensis and very soon became much more—an invaluable confidante, and the closest colleague in all his work. He dictated his articles and discourses, or wrote them in shorthand for her transcription. She gave him the entire devotion of her heart and life.

Pauline in 1833 brought a renewal of relations with Browning, and consequences both agreeable and important. He wrote to Fox, hoping he would recall 'an awkward sort of boy who had the honour of being introduced' some years before. He asked leave to submit 'a free and easy sort of thing' which he had written 'on one leg.' Fox replied in kindly terms and received a batch of twelve copies. He handed one of them to J. S. Mill, who

wrote a criticism that did not get into print. The *Repository* was friendly to new poets. Fox had acclaimed Tennyson's 1830 volume in ten pages (the magazine was a large octavo). He gave equal measure to *Pauline*, almost certainly under gentle pressure from the Flowers, who knew well enough how near Eliza was to the inspiration of the poem. The sisters, too, were ardent Shelleyans, although Fox was emphatically of the opposing camp. When Leigh Hunt's *Beauties of Shelley* appeared he burst out, 'Stuff!' and added absurdly, 'The only beauty he ever had was his wife.' Nevertheless he rose nobly to this occasion, and included among his many extracts the picture of Shelley as the Sun-treader. It is not accurate to say that Fox was the one and only critic to recognise Browning in his nonage, for John Forster's article in the *Examiner* was both long and generous, recording his own discovery. It might have been supposed that two full-length reviews in journals of authority would bring some concrete result; yet not a single copy of the booklet was sold. The printer's bill, £26 5s., was paid by the poet's Camberwell aunt, Mrs. Silverthorne.

Within two years Browning was again in need of help, this time on behalf of *Paracelsus*. Fox gave him an introduction to Moxon, who let him into a few secrets as to the non-existent market for poetry. Tennyson, he said, was popular only in Cambridge. Henry Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde*, the most admired poetic drama of the decade, had barely paid expenses. The publisher who had the credit of issuing *Paracelsus* (at the elder Browning's expense) was Effingham Wilson, whose name stood in the London list for 100 years or so. Needless to say, Fox wrote an impressive review. It opened with the statement that here was something more than a poem: it was a Work. Later readers might have found this amusing, for in the 1880's Augustine Birrell could find nothing better to say of Browning's adventures in theatre than that 'first of all, they are *plays*, and not *works*, like the dropsical dramas of Sir Henry Taylor and Mr. Swinburne.'

On the threshold of the Victorian age it seemed an extraordinary thing that a young poet should dare to send out an ambitious philosophical poem, and one with so unfamiliar a setting. In the world of letters Browning was established by *Paracelsus*. The doors were all opened for him. He had a foretaste of the social success amid which his elderhood was passed. Many of the seniors were ready with warm tributes. The more prescient saw him as a leading spirit of the time. At a famous gathering of the eminent for supper to celebrate the production of *Ion*, Talfourd proposed the health of 'the youngest poet in England' and Wordsworth

seconded him with the courtesy of a famous elder. After a dinner at Fox's house Macready, in a mood of fervid admiration, begged Browning for a play, preferably on an historical theme. He wanted it urgently for two reasons: in support of his conviction that England might again have a poetic drama, and to assist him in redeeming the failures and indignities of many years. Browning responded with *Strafford*. The performance in 1837, with Macready and Helen Faucit in the lead, was an event of the Covent Garden season. Fox reviewed the play in the daily *True Sun*, and there were a few full houses in the short run.

A few months before the excitement of *Paracelsus* Fox and Eliza Flower were involved in a twofold crisis. Their intimacy had made serious trouble at home. Fox was unhappily mated, and the presence of an Egeria so gifted and lovable could hardly fail to cause a breach. A formal separation was arranged; and Fox persuaded his friend, now thirty years of age, into an experiment that called for some courage. He rented a cottage at Craven Hill, then a hamlet in the Paddington fields, and Eliza agreed to take charge, with responsibility for the three Fox children, one of whom was a deaf-mute. She was a perfect foster-mother. Her music was in nowise neglected, and her services as secretary were continued. Richard Garnett, Fox's biographer, says that but for her stimulus and practical initiative he might never have been heard of outside his congregation; but that is going a great deal too far.

In conventional England no reproach was ever attached to the unmarried family housekeeper, but when there is an estranged wife in the offing it is a different matter. Many of Eliza Flower's friends were offended, and several were irreconcilable. Among these, rather oddly, was Harriet Martineau, who admired both sisters and had put them into two of her stories. This domestic upset happened to coincide with a hot dispute in the Finsbury chapel, which resulted in the departure of many families from the congregation. The dissidents did not bring any charge of impropriety; it was of their minister in his editorial capacity that they complained. He had printed in the *Repository* several articles on marriage signed 'Junius Redivivus.' They advocated what was then known as the Miltonic doctrine—namely, that incompatibility should be made a sufficient ground for legal divorce.

The objectors were anxious only about the good name of South Place. They feared that the incident would be exploited as evidence that liberalism in theology went with laxity in moral standards. Fox emerged successfully, and after a brief interval the

faithful gave an affectionate welcome to Eliza when she rejoined her sister as leader of the singing.

The writer of the provocative articles was William Bridges Adams; and in this same year, 1834, (by what grace we are not told) he had the good fortune of marrying Sarah Flower. He lived until 1872, a man of varied talents if small success. As a lesser Junius he was a pugnacious radical pamphleteer, but his real gift was for mechanical invention. The new railways gave him opportunity. He was best known as inventor of the fish-joint which gave safety to the rails, thus making express speed practicable. It was adopted by railways everywhere. Adams, however, made little profit, and not much out of his many other devices. He established at Bow a locomotive plant, which was visited by Carlyle under the mistaken impression that Adams was a captain of industry of the type he was seeking between the days of *Chartism* and those of *Latter-day Pamphlets*. This venture failed, but the marriage seems to have gone well. There were no children. Sarah Flower died in 1848, secure in her niche among English hymn-writers as the author of 'Nearer, my God, to Thee.'

Browning had now become an occasional contributor to the *Repository*. Fox printed four lyrics and a sonnet. Readers with Calvinist memories would feel the sting of *Johannes Agricola in Meditation*, but what would they make of *Porphyrion's Lover*?

Craven Hill for some five years was attractive to all Fox's literary friends, Browning, of course, among them. Mrs. Bridell-Fox gives a bright sketch of him: 'Slim and dark and very handsome. Just a trifle of a dandy; full of ambition, eager for fame.' The Flower sisters, we may note, were somewhat concerned in these years over the perils of his situation. They detected in him a streak of arrogance, and thought him self-centred. But, as Eliza said, 'there were so many Robert Brownings.' It is not a little surprising to find them displeased at the time of *Pippa Passes*. Eliza sends it to a friend, who, she assumes, will not like it any better than they do:

A most exquisite subject, and it seemed so easy for a poet to handle. Yet here come one of those fatal ifs—the egoism of the man, and the pity of it.

All the same, 'there are superb parts; the very last is quite lovely.' Browning took her objections lightly and asked for her collaboration. 'The lyrics,' he wrote, 'want your music—five or six in all. How say you?' She did not say, and we may regret

the negative. Just then her collection of *Hymns and Anthems* was coming out, and they were all anxious for its success. It was a notable departure. Among the 150 numbers there were 65 with her tunes. The others were adapted from the masters, and her sister's hymns were numerous. Browning's last letter to Eliza Flower contains these unequivocal words :

I never had another feeling than entire admiration for your music—entire admiration. I put it apart from all other English music I know, and fully believe in it as the music we all want.

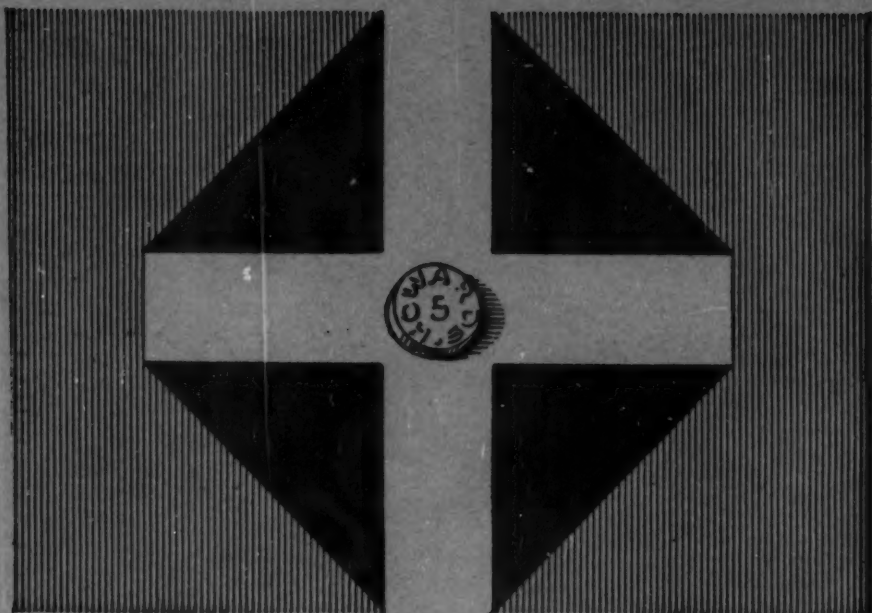
Browning's friendship with Fox was exceptional in duration as in character. It covered thirty years and was unimpaired to the last. His affection was mingled with respect, for the poet continued to think of this man as one of his masters. He admired his capacity and intellectual range, and we may guess that he looked upon his public labours with some wonder. In the 1840's, when the last illness of Eliza Flower was weighing heavily upon him, the renown of his eloquence spread over the country. He was one of the three champions of the Anti-Corn-Law League, and there were not a few to assert that Fox before a mass meeting was superior to the Tribune himself. John Bright, recalling in old age his associates in the Repeal agitation, wrote that Fox was 'the orator of the League.' Fifteen years after the Reform Act Fox was elected for Oldham, and made a name in the House as a pioneer of national education.

The latter stage of this long association was especially rewarding for Browning because his wife came into it with her customary fervour. Her feeling for the old man is expressed in many letters. Fox, by the way, in his final retirement, was reconciled to the partner who had given way to Eliza Flower.

There are several things that could fittingly be said of the relationships we have been following. The tension in the Fox household was unavoidable. With that one exception the record is all of smooth sailing. There were no quarrels or tempers. If occasional backbitings occurred on the fringe, we do not hear of them. These were fine people, of rare endowments and absorbing interests. They belonged to a section of English society which, often enough, has been presented as heavy, limited, philistine ; or, as Matthew Arnold was always saying, outside the main stream of the national life and tradition. Browning's early friends could not have been more vital, cultivated, and liberal-minded. And we may note, finally, one circumstance worthy of being underlined. These men and women were the product of two London suburbs, north and south of the Thames.







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